AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

GOSPELS OF ST. MATTHEW AND ST. MARK,

AND

OF SOME OTHER

DETACHED PARTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY THE REV. RICHARD WATSON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE lamented author of this work intended to write expository notes on the whole of the New Testament, but was called away by death before he had completed his design. He was especially desirous of presenting to the Church of God what he conceived to be the legitimate sense of the Epistle to the Romans, and of that to the Hebrews: but as he advanced in his important critical labours his health rapidly declined; and being apprehensive that he should not live to finish the work according to his original plan, he passed from the middle of St. Luke's gospel to the Epistle to the Romans. His strength, however, entirely failed before he had proceeded far with that sacred book; and in a few weeks after he had ceased to write he was summoned to his final account. The Exposition of St. Matthew's gospel he had corrected with more than his usual attention, as he did not expect to see it conducted through the press; and he gave the requisite directions to the printer, that, in the event of his decease, no difficulty might be experienced in its publication. The whole has been carefully printed from his own manuscripts.

Though a posthumous work, it is presumed that this Exposition will not be deemed unworthy of the author's reputation. The strong and steady light which it sheds upon the sacred oracles, and the spirit of pure and fervent devotion which pervades it, excite strong regret that the same enlightened piety and discriminating judgment were not employed in the elucidation of the remaining books of the New Testament. But the Lord "giveth not account of any of his ways;" and upon this, as well as upon every similar occasion, it becomes Christians to adopt the language of the humbled psalmist, "I became dumb, I opened not my mouth; for it was thy doing."

THOMAS JACKSON.

LONDON, *November* 16*th*, 1833.

PREFACE.

THE author of the following annotations being a minister among the Wesleyan Methodists, the sentiments held by that body, and deducible, as they conscientiously believe, from Holy Scripture, may be expected to be found in them. Nothing is, however, stated in the controversial spirit; and he leaves to all the same liberty to investigate the sense of the Divine word, which he claims himself, without breach of charity. Three copious commentaries* on the whole Bible, exclusive of the Notes of Mr. Wesley, have appeared in the religious society for whose use the present work is also principally designed. This is a gratifying fact, and affords honourable proof of the love of the Scriptures, and the desire to read them to edification, which characterize the Wesleyan Methodists. Within so short a period of time, no other religious body has ever produced so many commentators of equal rank, or given encouragement to the publication of so many commentaries, and those of a very ample size.

To none of them does the present attempt affect to be a rival. It is confined to the New Testament only; and it is not like the others, either in what is often called a family or a practical and devotional commentary. Its plan is therefore different; its sole object being the elucidation of the Scriptures; and by this means to lay the foundation, rather than suggest those practical and pious uses to which they must be applied if they make us "wise unto salvation." The leading rule by which the annotator has been conducted, is to afford help to the attentive general reader whenever he should come to a term, a phrase, or a whole passage, the meaning of which is not obvious; and to exhibit the true theology of the sacred volume. The notes are therefore brief upon the plainer passages, and most copious where explication appeared necessary. Nor has any difficulty been evaded; but the author has applied himself earnestly to open the meaning of the most obscure passages according to the ability which God has given him. The notes are all original, except in a very few instances, and then they are acknowledged, and, as far as the author is conscious, he has throughout most honestly given his views of the meaning of the Divine word without bias of party, or prejudice, as in the sight of God. He commits the fruit of the study of many years past to the blessing of God, and the candour of the reader.

* Those of Dr. Coke, Mr. Benson, and Dr. Adam Clarke.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.

. THE general title to all the inspired books of the Christian Revelation, Η Καινη Διαθηκη, could not be prefixed until the writings which it contains had been collected into one volume; for an account of which, those who have written on the canon of Scripture must be consulted. It first appears in a work of Origen, and by a common metonymy was transferred from the Christian dispensation or covenant itself to the books which record it. Διαθηκη was very early rendered into Latin by *testamentum*, instead of *pactum*, "covenant," according to Jerome's correction of the old Italic version, and thus passed into many ancient and most of the modern versions. There is, however, reason to conclude that *testamentum*, in the popular language of those ages, signified a covenant as well as a testament; for not only is the covenant with Noah rendered in the Italic version by *testamentum*, but in Isaiah xxx, 1, it is used for συνθηκη, which has no other sense than *covenant*.

The NEW COVENANT is the appropriate description of Christianity; for though διαθηκη signifies any disposition or arrangement in general, yet that arrangement or disposition which respected human redemption, both in the Old and New Dispensation, took the form of mutual promises, under mutual conditions, which is the true character of a covenant. This sense of the word διαθηκη, has the support of numerous passages in the New Testament, where the term occurs: and there is indeed but one, Heb. ix, 15, about which there can be any reasonable doubt; and even this, when it comes to be considered, will appear to be best interpreted in the sense of covenant. But were that solitary text excluded, the manner in which St. Paul opposes the law, which assuredly was not a testament, to the Gospel, in the phrases the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant,—the circumstance that the promises of Christ, and of our salvation through him, are expressed by the prophet by the phrase of making "a New Covenant with the house of Israel," renders it imperative upon us to take the term διαθηκη, when considered as a general description of the whole body of Christian doctrine and promise, and of the writings which contain it, in the sense of *Covenant*. Some commentators, under the force of this argument, attempt to compromise the matter, and to explain διαθηκη by "a covenant, including within it a testamentary bequest;" an unnecessary, and not wholly an innoxious representation, as it somewhat eludes the real character of Christ's death, the efficacy of which is not to be compared to that from which a testament derives its force, which is simply the death of the testator, of whatever kind, or under any circumstances; but to the efficacy of the ancient sacrifices by which the solemn covenants between God and man were typically ratified. We have nothing in the words of Christ, or of his apostles, to suggest to us the idea of our salvation and its numerous blessings being conveyed to us in any way answering to the idea of a testamentary bequest; but Christianity is the new and infinitely gracious covenant of God with mankind fully declared; in which he engages, accord-

ing to the forms of the said covenant, as quoted from the prophet by St. Paul, to be merciful to our unrighteousness; to remember our sins and iniquities no more; to put his laws into our minds, and to write them in our hearts; and to be to us a God, and to regard us as his people, and therefore to treat us as such in time and in eternity. The conveyance and security of all these comprehensive blessings of redemption were not simply by the death, but by "*the blood* of Christ;" that is to say, by his violent, sacrificial, and propitiatory death; which voluntary submission on his part was accepted by God on our account, as his resurrection from the dead publicly demonstrated. Thus this covenant of grace was confirmed and ratified to all who should, by complying with its terms,—"repentance toward God, and faith," or trust "in our Lord Jesus Christ,"—come personally within its provisions and promises, so as to claim the fulness of all its blessings, "grace, mercy, and peace." The true view of the Christian system, in brief, is, that it is "the new covenant in his blood;" and the appropriate description of that collection of sacred books, which illustrate and commend it, is, "The New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The usual title, The New Testament, is now, however, so familiar, that it would be affectation to disuse it; but still the distinction above made ought to be kept in mind.

The literal meaning of *ευαγγελιον* being *good news*, or *joyful tidings*, our term Gospel, compounded of two Saxon words, which signify *good tidings*, expresses it with happy precision. It is now generally used for the whole dispensation of mercy through Christ, to mankind; and in this general sense we find it in several passages of the New Testament. The word has, however, a restricted use, as the title of each account of the four evangelists. There it imports the history of the birth, actions, ministry, doctrine, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; but with constant reference to the joyful import of this intelligence, and the unspeakable benefits which are thus conveyed to mankind. For the same reason the four inspired historians of our Lord are called "evangelists," *publishers of good tidings;* and they are four, not that many accounts of Christ, called also "gospels," were not published even in early times, doubtless of various degrees of merit, and the most fabulous of them recording some truths which had been handed down by tradition; but these four only appeared invested with the authority of the Churches generally. Lardner has proved that no spurious or apocryphal gospels whatever were read in the assemblies of Christians when they appeared; nor admitted into the volume of Scripture; nor alleged as authority by different parties; nor noticed by the adversaries of the Christians. Up to the earliest times, however, the four gospels which we now possess are not only mentioned, but have this exclusive seal of their acknowledged inspiration put upon them, that they only were read in Churches, and they only referred to as infallible authorities in matters of controversy. Two of these were written by apostles, Matthew and John; and two by companions of the apostles, Mark and Luke, the former having been the companion of St. Peter, and the latter of St. Paul. We have, therefore, in some Greek MSS. and ancient translations an arrangement of the gospels according to the *rank* of these authors, Matthew, John, Luke, Mark; but in the majority of the Greek MSS., in all the old translations of Asia and Africa, and in catalogues of the canonical books, that *chronological* order is observed, which was most anciently and universally received,—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. This circumstance is important, as it assists us in explaining the peculiar character and object of each gospel. Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, says, "Matthew, who at the first taught among the Jews, published his gospel when he was going to

visit others. When Mark and Luke had also published their gospels, and these three had fallen into the hands of many, he, John, gave his approbation and testimony to their veracity; but something was defective in them, on which account John included in his gospel that space of time which the rest had omitted, and those parts of the history of our Saviour which occurred within it." But long before this, in the second century, Irenæus declares that, as to this chronological succession, there was no uncertainty or difference of opinion. Whether Matthew wrote his gospel in Greek or Hebrew, not only tradition, but internal evidence, shows that it was in the first place designed for the Jews, and was therefore first published in Palestine. Mark certainly wrote for the use of Gentile converts, as appears from his adding explanations to names of places and of things which were familiar to Jews; and that he wrote at Rome, and for the use of the Latin converts in the first instance, is the best supported opinion. Luke inscribes his gospel to a Greek; and from his long connection with the Churches of Greece and Asia Minor, he wrote his gospel in that part of the world, and especially for their use. John wrote after the rest, and no doubt in Asia Minor. The very composition of his gospel shows that he had seen all the rest; and that his chief object was to supply many of the longer discourses of Christ, and to render his account the means of refuting the heresies which had recently grown up.

It may here be generally remarked that the evangelists do not profess to give a complete account of all the circumstances of our Lord's life, nor to record all his miracles and discourses. This is expressly disclaimed by John: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book," xx, 30. And again, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did." The other evangelists also occasionally mention many important transactions in brief. In this, curiosity may be somewhat disappointed; but faith is edified. The manner of these writers—so simple and natural, so subdued as to their own emotions, and so far from any intention to produce *effect* upon the reader by so wonderful a narrative as that committed to them—has often been referred to as a strong internal proof of veracity. The absence of so many facts, conversations, and discourses from that narrative, which they were well able to supply, is a strong presumption of their inspiration. To add to the deep interest of their writings, and advance their own fame as authors, would have been strong motives to minds not under special Divine influence; and to gratify the eager desire of new Christians to know ALL the particulars possible respecting their adorable Lord, would present itself as a pious and laudable inducement to greater copiousness; but enough only is communicated to unfold the character and claims of Christ, the leading principles of his heavenly doctrine, and the evidence of his mission as it stood confirmed by stupendous miracles and accomplished prophecies. Enough is written "that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through his name." For the rest, the very tradition, though doubtless fondly cherished by many of the first believers, has been permitted to perish; and we are referred to that approaching state of perfect knowledge and vision when these will no doubt be among the subjects which shall be communicated by Christ to his glorified servants, or by those servants to each other.

Nor do the gospels taken together form a complete history; for although there are passages in each evangelist which do not occur in the others, they were so far from having the design of writing together one complete and consecutive history, that the same events and discourses frequently appear in each. This arose from the importance of the facts or doctrines which they

each state, and generally from their connection with the evidence of our Lord's mission. For as the gospels were at first published separately, it was necessary that each should contain sufficient to exhibit the true character of our Lord, the truths he came to declare, and the circumstances of his death and resurrection. In other respects, and subordinate to this leading design, they are modified by the particular views under which their composition was undertaken, and by that inspiration of the Holy Spirit which directed each evangelist, both as to insertions and omissions, with reference to that subsequent collection of their accounts which was to be made in the Church; that they might be read together, by Christians of succeeding times, who had not, as most of the primitive believers, though they might possess but one gospel, the opportunity of learning from some of the apostles, their companions, or their immediate successors, those farther particulars which the whole four gospels transmit to us. As to the number of evangelists, Chrysostom, in his prologue to the Homilies on Matthew, justly remarks, in answering the question, "How, then, was not one evangelist sufficient to say all?"—"Certainly, one might have sufficed; but as there are four such authors, who did not write at one and the same time, nor in the same place, who neither met together, nor acted in concert, and nevertheless speak as it were out of one mouth, hence arises a stronger proof of their credibility. But it is replied, the contrary rather took place, many passages being dissimilar. This also is a greater proof of credibility; for if they agreed minutely in all, both as to circumstance and expression, their opponents would never believe that they had not written their memoirs by agreement, or by personal understanding." "They are clearly separate and independent historians," says Mr. Nares, "and their close agreement in the most important circumstances of their narratives, forms a coincidence of collateral testimonies which cannot be paralleled in any other example."

It is disputed whether the title, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW, was originally affixed by himself. Of this we may be tolerably certain, that he did not give himself the appellation of "Saint," however deserving of it in its highest sense. The title is indeed found differently varied in MSS.; and the probability is, that after the other gospels were published, the inscriptions were added for the sake of distinction, and to transmit the testimony of the primitive Churches as to the authors. Chrysostom, however, says that Matthew himself called his work "*The Gospel*," δια τουτο ευαγγελιον την ιστοριαν εκαλεσιν, κ. τ. λ. (*Homil. I, in Matt. Præf.*) The titles of each finally became, with some variations in the MSS., the Gospel κατα Ματθειον, κατα Μαρκον, &c. "So the most ancient teachers of the Church cite them, not as the gospel of Matthew, of Mark, but *according* to Matthew, *according* to Mark," &c. (*Hug's Introduction.*)

The time when St. Matthew's gospel was published has been matter of debate among critics; some fixing it as near to the ascension of our Lord as A. D. 37, others extending it to A. D. 62, and others fixing upon several intermediate dates. The later dates rest chiefly upon an equivocal passage in Irenæus, and the more early have the reason of the case in their favour. It is much more probable that the first apostolic account of the life of our Lord should be written within a few years of his death, than that it should be so long delayed A. D. 61, or 62. Eusebius is express in fixing the time A. D. 41, in the third year of Caligula, that is, eight years after Christ's ascension. It is true that, as a matter of evidence, this does not much affect any question; for the immediate spread of the Gospel among such multitudes in Palestine, and its metropolis, and elsewhere, can only be accounted for by the unques-

tionable and supernatural character of the *facts* on which the whole Christian system rested, and the evidence of the miracles wrought by the primitive teachers themselves; and farther, all the gospels, if fixed at the latest dates which have been assigned to them, were certainly published while a considerable number of persons were still alive, who from personal knowledge were able to affirm whether the alleged facts, so particularly stated by the evangelists as to time, place, and persons, were true relations or not. The Jews especially had every motive to sift these accounts, and transported would they have been could they have refuted them. But this was never attempted. They attributed, on the contrary, the works of Christ to Satanic agency, and continued long to do so; and thus admitted the grand facts on which Christianity was founded, by the very theory on which they accounted for them. Still many became Christians in Judea, and other countries, who could only be generally and vaguely acquainted with the public life and discourses of their Redeemer; persons brought to faith and salvation by the impression of the miracles of the apostles, the convincing native energy of truth, and the secret influences of grace upon their hearts, for whose confirmation in faith, and the holy comfort of the Gospel, that history of Christ, that exhibition of his doctrine, that powerful impression of his whole extraordinary character, which every single gospel contains, was essential. The gospels were books to be read in their assemblies, as being placed upon a level with the sacred books of the Old Testament by their inspiration, and as being also the key to the law and the prophets; and copies were rapidly multiplied to be the light of every Christian family, and to afford counsel, comfort, and the subject of hallowing meditations, to individuals in their walks through life. All these present strong reasons for an early composition of an authorized history of Christ, and favour, as a presumptive argument, the early dates ascribed to that of St. Matthew, which was undoubtedly the first published. Add to this, the greater number of critics agree in the opinion that it was published not later than about eight years after the ascension of our Lord.

That the gospel of St. Matthew was first and more immediately designed for the Jews in Palestine, and of course also for the same people scattered throughout the principal cities of the world, appears to be indicated both by its early date, and from its being so eminently adapted to convince the Jews of the Messiahship of Jesus, by the frequency with which it points out the fulfilment of many of their ancient prophecies in him. A still farther proof is, that this evangelist does not, like Mark, whose history was anciently called the gospel of the Gentiles, add those explanatory remarks, as to various Jewish customs, sects, and other circumstances, which were sufficiently familiar to the Jews, but wholly unintelligible to almost all other people. When Mark represents the Pharisees as complaining "that the disciples of Jesus ate κοιναις χερσιν; that is, literally, with common hands; in the supposition that his readers might not be acquainted with the Hebrew signification of the expression, he has added the explanation, that is to say, with unwashed hands, τουτ' ἐστιν ἀνιπτοις. Still fearing that they could not thoroughly understand the ground of this complaint and the explanation of it, he clears up the matter by an observation on the customs and opinions of the Pharisees, and states that these never eat but with washed hands, imagining that they would otherwise be defiled. He explains what is called παρασκευη by the Jews, that is the Fore Sabbath, τουτ' εστιν προσαββατον; and what κορβαν means, as Josephus did for his Roman readers.

"Matthew recounts the same, even in the same expressions, and speaks of these and many other similar matters; but he abstains from every addition

and observation for the instruction of his readers, supposing all this to be already known to them.

"Luke makes numerous observations of a geographical nature in order that his Theophilus, to whom the work was addressed, might briefly be instructed as much as possible concerning the place which was the scene of such an event.

"Matthew does not pursue a similar course. Finding it superfluous to make any observations for the purpose of throwing light upon the morals, customs, opinions, and mode of thinking, all of which might be proper, as to Palestine; he also conducts himself in the same manner with regard to the geography, and is unmindful that his narrations might be unintelligible and obscure to any person who was not acquainted with the country, neighbourhood, cities," &c. (*Hug's Introduction*, vol. ii, p. 6.)

This seems sufficiently decisive as to the Jews being the persons this evangelist had primarily in view, in writing his gospel; but the question will naturally arise, Why then did Matthew write in Greek? It has been a long disputed question whether he did not write originally in Hebrew, that is, in the dialect of Palestine, vaguely so called. Those who contend that the gospel was written originally in Greek, reply to the question, that that language was then very generally used in the civilized world, and particularly in Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, &c. This followed from the Macedonian conquests, and the establishment of Greek colonies by the successors of Alexander, as far as Babylonia, Persia, and even India. In Egypt the numerous Jews there colonized had long before required for their religious use the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, which gave rise to the Septuagint version. Antioch, Tyre, Sidon, and other places adopted the language of the conquerors; and even the Roman public edicts were in those cities ordered to be exposed in the Latin and Greek languages. The Greek language and manners prevailed in many of the cities of the Jews for several ages. Even in Rome debates in Greek were sometimes heard. Tiberius and other of the Roman emperors answered such foreign ambassadors as spake Greek in the same language. The Roman officers of rank appear to have all spoken Greek, and in many of the provinces the judges gave judgments in it; so that this was the language of the courts of law. Thus it was in Syria and Phenicia, and, as several learned men who have largely investigated this subject have shown, there is no doubt that Pilate and Festus used the Greek tongue in Judea; as neither in Josephus, nor in the New Testament, have we any hint that they made use of an interpreter. With the higher classes of Jews the Greek was a necessary branch of education; but great numbers of the common people of different ranks learned it by connection and intercourse, in a more imperfect manner, but still in a sufficient degree for the ordinary purposes of life, with the numerous foreigners, and Hellenistic Jews, who abounded in their principal cities, and flocked to Jerusalem at their festivals. Our Lord is therefore supposed, not unfrequently, to have spoken in the prevailing Greek dialect; and judging from the apparently immediate communication between Philip and "the Greeks," that is to say, foreign Jews who did not speak the Hebræo-Aramean language of Palestine, who desired to see our Lord, the apostles also at that time were familiar with it. On this account, too, we observe that Jesus at once converses with these Greeks. As therefore a gospel written in Greek would be so largely understood even in Palestine, and when read in the assemblies of the Christians could be so easily rendered into the common tongue, for the instruction of all, a constant practice in the synagogues as to the Hebrew Scriptures, little

restriction was placed upon its utility by its being composed in Greek; while its benefit would be largely extended among that still more numerous class of Jews who lived beyond the boundaries of Palestine, in every noted city and country of the Roman empire, and who, though they might in some instances understand the Hebrew of the Old Testament, in scarcely any could they know the mixed Hebrew dialect of Judea. To all these the Greek was universally vernacular. When, however, we speak of the Greek language as in use among the Jews, whether in Palestine or in distant places, the general reader needs to be informed that, as Professor Winer has observed, "in the age which succeeded Alexander the Great, the Greek language underwent an internal change of a double nature. In part, a prosaic language of books was formed, η κοινη διαλεκτος, which was built on the Attic dialect, but was intermixed with not a few provincialisms; and partly a language of popular intercourse was formed, in which the various dialects of the different Grecian tribes, heretofore separate, were more or less mingled together; while the Macedonian dialect was peculiarly prominent. The latter language constitutes the basis of the diction employed by the Seventy, the writers of the Apocrypha and of the New Testament.

"All the nations who after Alexander's death came under Greek rulers, and gradually adopted the language of their conquerors in the common intercourse of life, particularly the Syrians and Hebrews, spoke the Greek less purely than the native Grecians, and enstamped upon it more or less of the characteristics of their respective vernacular tongues. Since now all the Jews who spoke the Greek language are commonly called *Hellenists*, so the dialect used by them has obtained the appellation of *Hellenistic*. On this account the New Testament diction has been called Hellenistic." (*Winer's Grammar*, pages 22 and 27.)

The chief difference between the classical Greek and the Hellenistic lies in the idiom: the inflections are the same, but the phrase is different. The sacred language, the Hebrew, and, in some instances, the Palestinian dialect, have each left its impress upon it. The phraseology, indeed, is often Hebrew, though the words are Greek; still it contains fewer Hebrew grammatical constructions than the Septuagint. The style of the New Testament was a circumstance, however, no doubt determined by the Holy Ghost himself, and by which we may conclude, in spite of the fastidiousness of many critics, *the truth* has been more fully enunciated than if the refined language of the Greek rhetors had been adopted; as at least being more simple, and for this reason more capable of nearly literal translation into the various tongues of mankind. We are always to remember that the Gospel was communicated "in words which the Holy Ghost taught," and that the reasons for the choice must have been determined by infinite wisdom. Some of these are even obvious; as, for instance, that it affords a strong point of evidence that the language of the New Testament writers should be the language of men in the precise circumstances, and living in the precise places, which they profess. The only conclusion to which any critic could come in reading the histories of the four evangelists is, that their works, being written in Greek, yet in none of the proper dialects of that language, and with such a resemblance to the Hebrew in idiom, were written by native Jews,—by Jews, too, living before the last expulsion of that people from their ancient seats; which is just what the Christian Church has always affirmed of them. That they were plain men, too, unacquainted with even that sort of philosophy which among the higher Jews was known and studied, is equally clear from the entire absence of all allusions to it in their writings. Here nothing of human

speculation appears, nothing of rhetorical art, nothing of the inventive power of genius; and the reason is given by St. Paul, that "our faith might not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."

Some very learned but mistaken men, indeed, who appear to have been scandalized at the assertion, that the Greek of the New Testament was not classical, have bent their efforts to exhibit parallel phrases taken from the most approved Greek authors, and have, in fact, in some instances, succeeded. But the point is now generally given up as of no importance; or rather, because the fair admission of the fact, as far as it goes, is to the honour of the Gospel. It is certain that the style lacks neither clearness nor strength,—two of the greatest qualities of writing; and how far it might have suffered in these respects by the trimming of the grammarian in a fastidious age, we know not. Few men of real taste would even exchange the prayers composed in the time of Elizabeth for the very same prayers cast into what is now called classical English; and not only does the style of St. Paul, for instance, rise to the fulness of perspicuity and vigour, but it has passages of elegant beauty and lofty majesty, to which no parallel can be found. The power which raised, sustained, and subdued the world with this force and majesty, could easily have conformed the idiom and construction to Greek usage and rules; but the Spirit designed not to speak independent of the men; but the men were to speak and write by the Spirit, and to preserve that appropriate dialect to which they and their countrymen were accustomed; yet so that, while their dialect preserved its distinctive character, it should yet be so under immediate control and direction, that, as their Master spake "as never man spake," so they should write as never men wrote.

Reasons have been given above in favour of the opinion, that St. Matthew first wrote his gospel in the Greek tongue, with which he, as a man in office, and of at least respectable education, was no doubt familiar: but it is proper also to state the opposite opinion. So uniform is the testimony of antiquity, that he wrote a Hebrew gospel, meaning thereby one in the common language of Judea, that, did not the fathers rely wholly upon the testimony of a passage from Papias only, whom they have all followed, and of whose judgment Eusebius, though he receives his testimony in this respect, speaks very lightly, this question could not have been so warmly disputed. In the list of names ranged on each side of this controversy there is perhaps nothing to turn the scale, so high is the authority of most of them, both continental and British, in researches of this kind; but the question is, in fact, of almost no importance, since the undoubted antiquity of St. Matthew's Greek gospel is so high as to reach to the lifetime of that apostle himself, to whom those fathers who allow that he wrote the gospel in Aramean ascribe the translation of that into Greek, or the composition of two original works. Eusebius expressly points out a passage quoted from the Psalms, in which St. Matthew, in his Greek translation, departed from the Septuagint, and rendered into Greek from his own view of the sense of the Hebrew text: and although Origen does not speak of St. Matthew's gospel as a Greek translation of that written for the Jews in their own language, which he believed to exist, yet he speaks of the gospel which St. Matthew wrote for all classes of Christians composing the whole Church under heaven, which a work written in the Palestinian dialect could not be; and so, in fact, he gives his testimony to St. Matthew being the author of the gospel in Greek commonly received as his, and indeed never questioned from the earliest times. Several of the learned have therefore adopted the theory of two originals, alleging the consent of antiquity for the Hebrew, and evident marks of originality for the Greek. Still, however,

though the latter is a conclusive argument, the former, the consent of antiquity, is not in this case sufficiently decisive, to preponderate against those weighty reasons which those have adduced who advocate but one original in Greek. That there would be unauthorized but still very interesting accounts of our Lord's history, some longer and some shorter, written by many with honest intentions, even before Matthew wrote, is very probable; and we have strong proofs of the great antiquity of a work in the popular language, called "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," and another, "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," meaning the Jews in Palestine, and another, "The Gospel according to the Apostles," if these were not varied forms of the same work, framed by the Nazaræans and Ebionites, Judaizing Christian sects, who in a short time became strongly tinctured with Gnosticism, and the perfect counterparts of those against whom St. Paul so strongly inveighs in several of his epistles. These gospels are referred to by Ignatius, Origen, Jerome, and others; and it was their very antiquity which led them probably to conclude them to be transcripts, more or less corrupted, of the supposed Matthew's gospel according to the Hebrews, or, what is the same, the Hebrew Aramean "Gospel according to St. Matthew." It is, however, a remarkable fact, that none of the fathers *had ever seen* this alleged uncorrupted gospel of St. Matthew. Its disappearance ought also to be accounted for. This has been done by some modern critics, by considering it as the consequence of the dispersion of the Jews after the taking of Jerusalem, and the disuse of their vernacular language. But this ought rather to have diffused so precious a work as an original gospel written by an apostle, and of course of equal authority with his gospel in Greek, which was universally received. Such a work ought to have been found among the faithful Hebrew Christians in various places into which they fled for shelter, under the special protection of Christ, who had warned them to escape on the first approach of the Roman armies to Jerusalem. Had such a work been required from St. Matthew, on the ground of general usefulness to the Palestinian Jewish believers, numerous copies of it must have been taken, both in Judea and in Syria; and yet "Origen obtained no trace of it; he could nowhere find any thing but the book κατ' Εβραιους, the value of which he left to each individual's judgment; yet the discovery of Matthew in his original language was of no less consequence to him, as his perseverance in investigations of this nature was indefatigable. In the same manner as he laboured upon the Old Testament for the sake of restoring the Septuagint, by reference to the original text and the other existing critical aids, so also was he occupied with a recension of the New Testament. The many faults which had crept into Matthew, of which he expressly complains, were to be remedied in no more effectual way than by consulting the original text, as he had done in the Old Testament. He made, during twenty-eight years, various journeys for critical purposes; he drew many unused and forgotten manuscripts out of their obscurity, in which they would perhaps have decayed, for the sake of leaving no means unessayed to amend the Biblical text. His journeys were directed through Palestine and Syria, and at Tyre he laboriously formed his critical apparatus. In spite of these troublesome and voluntary investigations, which this scientific man made, he nowhere discovered any trace of such an original gospel of Matthew. Pamphilus, a Phenician from Barut, famed as a martyr, as the teacher of Eusebius, and, on account of his Biblical learning, as a scholar, established, for the Church at Cesarea, a library, celebrated among the ancients, to furnish books, for which he most carefully explored every direction. The treasure there provided in Biblical literature attracted Jerome, also, who made

use of it to advantage. But for this collection Pamphilus had obtained no Hebrew copy of Matthew: it was only the Nazaræan book that he could procure, which Jerome, who translated it, here examined. So fruitless were the endeavours of the ancients to obtain a sight of the pretended original text of the evangelist, that its existence seems to have been a mere report, and it nowhere appears to have existed." (*Hug's Introduction*, vol. ii, 58, 59.)

But another subject has been largely discussed by the persevering critics of modern times, and especially in Germany; and has led to the most patient and acute investigations, which, however, as in most similar cases, have terminated by ranging those who have engaged in them on different sides. The chief benefit has been an instructive display of the different principles upon which the learned conduct such inquiries, and the eliciting of much information, which, if it does not serve the main point, is often useful in others not at first intended. The remarkable agreement among the three first evangelists, not only in facts, but in words; the use of the same expression for many verses together; the differences which then arise, and which again subside into the same exact correspondence; are circumstances which, it is supposed, can only be accounted for by assuming, 1. That each evangelist embodies many of the same oral traditions common among the immediate disciples of our Lord; or, 2. That the later evangelists saw and copied partially the writings of the preceding; or, 3. That there was one original document, from which *Archetypus Evangeliorum*, or πρωτευαγγελιον, each selected at pleasure. In this country, Bishop Marsh has adopted and largely defended this hypothesis of a common document. "Whoever," says he, "thinks it possible that three texts so closely allied could have been formed independently of each other, may easily convince himself of the contrary by translating a page from any language, and then comparing his own version of it with any other; for he will find that, though the same in substance, they are not identically alike. The argument is strengthened, if we find three authors not only making choice of identical words in common use, but such as are unusual, and which they do not employ themselves on other occasions." These discussions have unhappily been carried on both in Germany and England, either in entire forgetfulness, or with too little consideration, of the inspiration of the evangelists. These writers have been treated as mere human authors; and this has led to the misapplication, and, indeed, often the impertinent obtrusion, of a vast mass of acute and laboured criticism. But a reference to the original circumstances of the case will always serve to clear our way out of the labyrinths in which bold but theory-loving critics often entangle themselves and their readers. As to the public actions of Christ, they would be remembered by multitudes; but would be stated with great variety by different persons; and, through human infirmity, where there was no ill design, would often be greatly altered in their transmission from those who witnessed them, to those who did not. Many of the sayings of Christ were at the time designedly enigmatical, and could not be understood until after his ascension: and even then only by those who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit; and as for his longer discourses, human memory was so inadequate to retain them faithfully, that one of his own promises to his apostles was to send the Spirit to bring them "to remembrance." Thus a large body of facts and conversations were floating, so to speak, for some years in the minds and discourses of his disciples, all correct as to substance, but more or less confused as to their full import and exact character, until the day of pentecost; when what had been accurately remembered was explained, what was forgotten was revived, and what was

feebly apprehended was fully seized by the mind. These gifts were bestowed on many, and especially upon those who were appointed to preach the Gospel, and convert others. Every apostle, and every teacher, and no doubt many of the more immediate disciples of our Lord who had followed him from the beginning, were therefore qualified to write one of those accounts which we call a gospel; as he was qualified, by his miraculous endowments, to declare them orally: and among them the agreement in substance, and very often in words, must have been obvious; a circumstance which could only create surprise, provided the special gift and office of the Holy Spirit, to take of "the things of Jesus and show to them," were denied or left out of the argument. From this inspiration it would not, indeed, follow that each of the apostles in his preaching should express the same truth always in exactly the same words; though, as that might in many cases be necessary for the clear enunciation of a doctrine delivered by their Lord, that would be provided for by Him under whose influence they were: and it is therefore quite probable that these primitive preachers, without any concert with each other, and in distant places, did sometimes deliver the same thing in various phrase, and sometimes in the same, as we see it done in the writings of the evangelists. So as to the oral information concerning facts in the history of our Lord, with which they furnished the new converts in different places, they would impart some more copiously and circumstantially than others, as the case of the people, and many other circumstances, seemed to require; some laying more stress upon one, some upon another, and some giving the same relation more copiously, others more curtly; still influenced in all by that Spirit which was always with them. Of this primitive preaching, so far as it related to the instruction of inquirers or new converts, before any gospel had been published, or where copies had not reached, the gospels themselves may be considered as an exact counterpart; only with this difference, that as all the first inspired preachers were not directed to write, those who were appointed to this office were placed under special superintendence, that each writing should be fitted to answer its end as to the persons for whom it was immediately designed, as that of St. Matthew, in the first instance, for the Jews; those of Mark, the companion of St. Peter, and Luke, the companion of St. Paul, for the churches generally, but the latter rendered more copious than the former; and that of St. John, to counteract the growing Gnostic errors as to the person of Christ, and to preserve his longer discourses; while the whole, when collected and preserved, as in the intention of their divine Author they were always designed to be, should be for the benefit of the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, and be adapted to refute every species of fundamental error to the end of time.

If the MATTER of the gospels be inspired, we must conclude that the FORM was determined by the same authority, but still under a rule; that while man was made use of by the Holy Spirit, the character and circumstances of the writer should be preserved, not displaced. There would be, therefore, in these writings, a substantial agreement, and there would often be an entire similarity;—a substantial agreement, because in such writings there can be nothing but truth; and this would chiefly apply to those things which they had known "accurately from the beginning," and which were remembered by them;—and an entire similarity, as to those things which had been specially "brought to their remembrance," because that would be done, probably, as to all the disciples at the day of pentecost, in the same words; and, if so, in the same words, or nearly so, afterward, as to those inspired to write the gospels, which words would be in the same language in which they wrote.

There appears, therefore, not the least force in the circumstance of their frequent verbal agreement to impel us to either of the conclusions which has been considered inevitable; that the evangelists copied from each other; or that they each copied from a common original gospel, the *Archetypus Evangeliorum*, as it has been called. "I admit, indeed," says Bishop Randolph, "of a common document; but that document was no other than the preaching of our blessed Lord himself. In looking up to him, the author of their faith and mission, and to the very words in which he was wont to dictate to them, which not only yet sounded in their ears, but were also recalled by the aid of his Holy Spirit, promised for that very purpose, they have given us their gospels, often agreeing in words, though not without much diversification, and always in sense."

Harmonies of the gospels, or attempts to form one consecutive account out of the four in chronological order, have but ill repaid the labour bestowed upon them, because almost all harmonists have attempted too much. In different languages, they approach to near two hundred in number; and, still disappointed, one has followed another into the same field of hopeless toil. One mischievous effect has, indeed, sometimes resulted. Discrepances among the evangelists have been often complained of, when the real discrepance has not been between evangelist and evangelist, but between them and the false schemes of the harmonists themselves. As it has been remarked, the evangelists manifestly never intended, either together or separately, to give an exact and full chronological and historical account of our Lord's life and ministry; but to state those particulars which should display his character, and show the fulfilment of prophecy in him; to record the substance of his teaching, and those events of his birth, life, death, and resurrection, which form the basis of his religion. The order of time was with them, therefore, but a secondary consideration, and, in several instances, appears to have been thought of no importance. Such a general order and succession as the case required is, however, sufficiently manifest; and by considering this, several passages derive illustration and force. This is generally within the power of every reader, as he may be easily assisted by lists of parallels. It may be useful, however, to remark that harmonies may be divided into two general classes,—those which assume that the chronological order has been observed in the gospels; and those which, allowing that this order has been more or less neglected, profess, on very different schemes, to correct the supposed irregularity.

Matthew, who had also the name of Levi, was, at an early period of our Lord's ministry, called to follow him, as he was sitting at the receipt of custom at Capernaum, upon the sea of Galilee. This was called Christ's "own city," because of his most frequent residence there, after he left Nazareth, Matt. iv, 13. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Matthew, who was also a resident there, had heard his preaching, knew his character, and was already a believer. On this occasion he was, however, bidden to "follow" him; the import of which command he knew was, to become, in a more formal and intimate manner, his disciple, and to continue with him in all places, as the celebrated Jewish rabbins were attended by their chosen scholars. It implied, also, his seeking more perfect instruction in Christ's heavenly doctrine. This explains the readiness with which Matthew obeyed the call; and the joy that he felt in being admitted into the number of our Lord's peculiar disciples,—those who were permitted to behold all his works, to hear all his conversations and discourses, and to be trained to teach his doctrines to others,—was expressed by his making a great feast for his fellow

publicans, at which Jesus and his disciples attended. The publicans were odious to the stricter Jews, especially the Pharisees; not, however, let it be observed, always on account of their rapacity, though that might be chargeable upon many, but because they submitted to collect the Roman imposts,—a mark of subjection which the pride of the Pharisees affected to disown, although their country was, in fact, a Roman province. That there were respectable men among even the publicans, appears from the example of Zaccheus and Levi, or Matthew. When they classed them emphatically with "sinners," it was therefore because they thought the office, when held by a Jew, an apostacy from, or at least an offence against, Judaism. In modern language, we should call Matthew a custom-house officer, because his office was to receive the dues paid at the port of Capernaum upon goods landed there; and that he was of the higher rank, may be gathered from his making the great feast just mentioned, at which he entertained a very large company. He was finally made one of the twelve apostles. Of his labours out of Judea we have nothing certain; but the fathers seem to agree that he left Palestine on some foreign evangelic mission.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

1 The genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph. 18 He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary when she was espoused to Joseph. 19 The angel satisfieth the misdeeming thoughts of Joseph, and interpreteth the names of Christ.

1 THE book of the [a]generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

a Luke iii, 23.

2 [b] Abraham begat Isaac; and [c] Isaac begat Jacob; and [d] Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

b Gen. xxi, 3.—c Gen. xxv, 26.—d Gen. xxix, 35.

CHAPTER 1., Verse 1. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.*—Whether this title merely introduces the genealogy which follows, or extends to the whole account of our Lord contained in this gospel is a question disputed by interpreters. In Gen. v, 1, "This is the book of the *generations* of Adam," the LXX. use the same phrase as that here employed by St. Matthew; and the section which it introduces is plainly an account of Adam's production, and of the patriarchs who descended from him in the line of Seth to Noah. But the word γενεσις occurs also in Gen. ii, 4: "These are the *generations* of the heavens and of the earth when they were created;" where it obviously signifies the history or relation of their production, and of the several events which followed. In Greek authors γενεσις signifies *original extract, descent, or birth;* but the Hebrew mode of speaking is here probably the better rule; and the term may be here extended to the history which follows, as in Gen. vi, 9, where, "These are the *generations* of Noah," is the title of a section which says nothing of his descent, but carries us on to the character of that patriarch, and the events of his life. If this introductory clause be limited to the genealogy, it may be translated, as by Campbell, "the lineage," if taken in the more extended sense, "the history of Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ.—On the name *Jesus*, see the note on verse 21. When Matthew adds *Christ* to this name he declares that Jesus was the MESSIAH; and in proof of this his gospel was written. The word signifies, *one anointed;* in allusion to the custom of consecrating and inaugurating priests and kings among the Jews, by anointing them with oil. The composition for this purpose, and which was applied not only to persons but to things set apart for the service of God, was made by Moses under Divine direction, and kept in the sanctuary. It was typical of the communication of the Holy Spirit with which the Church is replenished; and for this reason it is, that his sacred influence upon the minds of believers is called by St. John "*an unction*, or anointing, from the Holy One." It was the full effusion of the Spirit upon our Saviour which constituted him "the Messiah, or Christ;" that is "the Anointed of the Lord." After the resurrection of our Lord the term Christ, without the article, passed into a proper name, and, as such, is used to distinguish the Divine founder of our religion.

The son of David, the son of Abraham.—The terms *son* and *daughter* were used by the Hebrews to signify grandchildren, or any lineal descendants, however remote. Thus, our Lord calls the woman whom he healed of an infirmity, "a DAUGHTER of Abraham." The Messiah was to be a descendant of Abraham, through Isaac, not Ishmael; through Jacob, not Esau; and was to be of the tribe of Judah, and of the house and lineage of David. Thus was fulfilled in our Lord the promise made to Abraham, "that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;" and the covenant with David, "that of the fruit of his body he would raise up the Christ to sit upon his throne." The name, "Son of David," appears constantly in the latter Jewish writings for "the Messiah;" and that it was so used in common language in the time of our Lord appears from several passages of the gospels: "Hosannah to the Son of David;" "Have mercy upon us, thou Son of David," &c. St. Matthew therefore proves from the Jewish genealogies, that our Lord was descended from David and Abraham.—This was sufficient for the purpose of this evangelist, who wrote immediately for the use of the Jews: but St. Luke, who wrote his gospel for the Gentile Churches, carries up the genealogy from Abraham to Noah and Adam; and thereby put them in possession of the Old Testament account of the origin and descent of mankind, and corrected their vain traditions and absurd fables.

Verse 2. *Abraham begat Isaac.*—For a full investigation of the questions which have been raised on the genealogies of Christ given by St. Matthew and St. Luke, recourse may

3 And [e] Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and [f] Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And [g] Jesse begat David the king; and [h] David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 And [i] Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And [k] Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11 And *Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, [l] Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

[e] Gen. xxxviii, 27.—[f] 1 Chron. ii, 5; Ruth iv, 18.—[g] 1 Sam. xvi, 1; xvii, 12.—[h] 2 Sam. xii, 24.—[i] 1 Chron. iii, 10.

[k] 2 Kings xx, 21; 1 Chron. iii, 13.—* *Some read, Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias.*—[l] 1 Chron. iii, 17, 19.

be had to Grotius, Hammond, Le Clerc, Lightfoot, Bishop Kidder, Whitby, Dr. Barrett, and others who have written at large upon them. The genealogies coincide from Abraham to David; and then so entirely differ, except in two descents, that they must be regarded as two distinct tables; and the opinion now generally admitted is that of Lightfoot, that St. Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, whose adopted son Jesus was; and St. Luke, that of his virgin mother.—This derives strong confirmation from the circumstance that the Jewish rabbins in their writings call Mary the daughter of Eli. This distinction in the genealogies also serves to explain the reason why St. Luke begins his genealogy with stating that Jesus was the SUPPOSED son of Joseph, "who was the son of Eli." The natural father of Joseph was, as Matthew states, Jacob; but Mary being the daughter of Eli, Joseph became his son-in-law; or simply, according to the vague way in which the Hebrews used such relative terms, his SON; which is farther confirmed by another instance of a son-in-law being called a son in the same table, namely, Salathiel, who is called "the son of Neri," that is, his son-in-law; his natural father being Jechonias, 1 Chron. iii, 17. The only point of real importance, however, in this question is, whether Mary as well as Joseph was of the house of David, because the Christ was indubitably to be of the seed of David "according to the flesh," which our Lord was not by mere virtue of his being the adopted son of Joseph, and entered as such in the Jewish genealogies. Now, though there seems sufficient reason to conclude that Mary married Joseph as next of kin; and though the very silence of the Jews, who, upon the promulgation of the doctrine of Christ's miraculous conception, at whatever period that was first made known, whether during our Lord's life, or immediately after his ascension, must have raised this fatal objection, if Mary had not been a descendant of David as well as Joseph, proves that this fact was a subject of public notoriety; yet the matter is settled by a passage in the gospel of St. Luke, which those who have investigated this question of the two genealogies have generally overlooked. In Luke i, 32, when the angel makes the annunciation to Mary that she should become the mother of the Messiah, he says, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of HIS FATHER David,"—terms which could not have been used unless Mary herself had been David's descendant. It may be added to this, that unless it had been a matter sufficiently well known and acknowledged, that Mary and Joseph were of the same house and lineage, it could have answered no end for Matthew to have copied from the public genealogical tables of the Jews the descent of Joseph from David, since he himself closes the list of descents with an account of the conception and birth of Jesus, which declares that he was not the son of Joseph, but of Mary only. But the family relationship of Mary and Joseph being well known, the one genealogy was as well suited to his purpose as the other. Beside that, it had also this advantage, that it established our Lord's *legal* right to the throne of David, through Joseph, of whom he was the son by adoption. And this was of importance in arguing with the Jews; for, although Mary was descended from David, yet, had she married into the tribe of Levi, under the same circumstances as she married Joseph, our Lord would have been reckoned in the Jew-

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of [m]Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a

[m] St. Luke, chap. i, 27.

ish genealogies as of the tribe of Levi, and his *legal* claim to the throne of David could not have been maintained on the ground of descent; but, having married into her own tribe, our Lord was the descendant of David, both in law and by nature.

With respect to other difficulties in these tables of descent, they are to be referred to the Jewish records, and not to the evangelists who copied them. As, however, the Jews exerted particular care in preserving the pedigree of their priests, and also the line of David, in which they expected the Messiah, the discrepances are probably apparent only, and the obscurity arises from the circumstance that their mode of keeping them, as being affected by their changes of name, or the practice of bearing double names, and by their laws of succession, is now but partially known. The tables are, however, sufficiently clear to prove the only point for which they were introduced, that Jesus was the son of David, and the son of Abraham.

Verse 16. *Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom, &c.*—Here it is to be observed, that the evangelist, in giving the natural line of descent from David to Joseph, uses the term εγεννησε, *begat*, in each instance; but instead of saying that Joseph begat Jesus, he turns the phrase by saying, "*Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary*, OF WHOM WAS BORN *Jesus*;" thus intimating what he afterward more fully states, that Jesus was not begotten of Mary by her husband, Joseph.

Verse 17. *Fourteen generations.*—Lightfoot has shown, by a number of instances, that it was usual with the Jews to reduce things or numbers nearly alike to the same term, for the sake of aiding the memory. Here, therefore, are three regular classes, formed by unimportant omissions: the first, under the patriarchs, and judges, from Abraham to David; the second, under the kings; the third, under the governors and Asmonean priests, from the captivity to Christ. The Greeks as well as Jews reckoned by generations. So Pausanias: "From Thanypus to Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, πεντε ανδρων και δεκα εισι γενεαι, were fifteen generations of men." So also Herodotus and Polybius.

Verse 18. *Now the birth of Jesus, &c.*—The birth of our Saviour is now placed by chronologers in about four years before the common era from which we reckon. In the first ages of Christianity the practice of dating from the birth of Christ was unknown; and, in fact, was not generally adopted among Christians till about A. D. 730; and it is now generally agreed that an error of four years was then made in fixing the era.

Was espoused to Joseph.—Maimonides says, that "before the giving of the law, if a man met a woman in the street, he might take her home and marry her; but when the law was given, the Israelites were commanded that if a man would take a woman, he should do it before witnesses, and this was called an *espousal*, or betrothing; and when a woman is espoused, although she is not yet married, or has entered her husband's house, yet she is a man's wife." Six months, and sometimes a year, intervened between the betrothment and the nuptials. "No woman," says Lightfoot, "is ever married, among the Jews, without a previous espousal." The same previous ceremony appears to have been customary among other nations.

Before they came together, &c.—Before she was removed to her husband's house, and the marriage consummated.

She was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—Εκ πνευματος αγιου. Because of the absence of the article, Wakefield translates, "by a holy spirit," signifying, by the Divine power. But Bishop Middleton has shown that after prepositions anomalous instances of the omission of the article frequently occur. Besides, we have no indication of a plurality of beings, bearing the appellation of "holy spirits," in the New Testament, and no such phrase as πνευματα αγια. That the human nature of our Lord should be thus formed supernaturally by the power of the Holy Ghost, was necessary, that he might escape the traduction of original sin, and be born and remain perfectly pure and sinless, that so the Divine nature might, without moral degradation, be personally united with the human, and that he might be qualified to be a perfect example of holiness, and finally "offer himself without spot to God," as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Verse 19. *Then Joseph her husband, being*

just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son,[n] and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

[n] St. Luke, chap. i, 31.

a just man, &c.—Δικαιος is by some taken to signify *merciful*, or *compassionate*, a sense in which the word is seldom or never used; and which, though it appears to harmonize with the moderate conduct which Joseph purposed to pursue toward Mary, destroys in fact the force of the passage. That he was a mild and considerate man, appears from his being unwilling to make her *a public example*; but it was because he was a *just* man, that is, a man who regarded the law, and was observant of moral duties, that he resolved *to put her away*, though *privily*; so that here we have the character of this excellent man drawn by a brief but striking touch of the pencil of inspiration. His sense of justice prevented his affection from stooping to what then appeared to be a disgrace, and yet the mildness of his character led him to perform an act of justice without severity. Παραδειγματισαι, *to make her a public example*, here means, either to bring her before the magistrate, in order to her being punished capitally according to the law, Deut. xxii, 23, 24; or, more probably, as this law required witnesses of the crime, which Joseph could not produce, to divorce her in a public manner, and thereby openly expose her shame. There was, however, a method of divorce so private as to require to be done in the presence of only two persons, by simply giving the woman a bill of divorce, without assigning any reasons. This Joseph resolved to adopt; and as this proceeding illustrates the character of Joseph, so the whole circumstance of the case exhibits that of Mary. She does not appear to have made any communication to Joseph of the message of the angel. She might be forbidden to do this; or she might wisely conclude that it would be treated as an idle tale; and so she left the matter in the hands of God, supported only by her NOBLE FAITH, and submitting to temporary suspicion in patient expectation of a Divine interposition at the fittest time. The idolatrous worship paid to the virgin has perhaps led Protestants too much to overlook those striking illustrations of her character which incidentally, but powerfully break forth in the narratives of the evangelists. They, however, unite to prove her to have been a woman equally eminent in the order of intellect and piety; retired and humble, but firm, thoughtful, and singularly qualified to pass through that succession of mysterious scenes, which could only be opened fully by the resurrection of her glorious Son from the dead. Never was mother so honoured or so tried.

Verse 20. *The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.*—In this mode, as well as others, God "at sundry times" made known his will to the patriarchs and prophets; so that dreams were reckoned by the Jews as one of the modes of prophetic inspiration. It was the tradition of Divine revelations being made in this manner, carried into the heathen world, which led to the common notion of the significancy of dreams; and thus by abuse it became, and still continues a fruitful source of superstition. The prophetic dreams of sacred writ were not, however, common dreams; and as they were supernaturally induced, and were admonitory, directive, or predictive, they were accompanied with an internal evidence; of what kind we cannot say, but such as distinguished them from the ordinary rovings of the mind in sleep, and afforded sufficient conviction of their supernatural character. And although this method of communication was more frequent and longer continued under those dispensations of religion which preceded Christianity, yet they were probably sometimes vouchsafed to pious Gentiles; and even now the phenomenon of dreaming, a very powerful instrument of working upon the mind of man, may occasionally be employed to warn the wicked and direct the good, although as the medium of revealing religious truth, dreams are no longer necessary. The use or abuse of this doctrine will, however, depend upon sobriety of mind.

Verse 21. *And thou shalt call his name Jesus.*—Mary being taken home to be the wife of Joseph, it belonged to him as the father, in the legal construction, to give the child a name; and he was directed to call him Jesus, which is the Hebrew Joshua in the Greek form, and signifies a Saviour, from יש *to save*. Hence the angel adds, *for he shall save his people from their sins*. He does not say, according to the expectation of the Jews, he shall save his people ISRAEL from their Gentile ENEMIES; but indefinitely, *his people*, all who believe on him, whether Jew or Gentile; and that not from temporal calamity or degradation, but *from their sins*: thus, from the beginning, was the notion of a political Messiah excluded from the minds of Joseph and Mary. The very name of our

22 Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 ° Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and* they shall call his name Emmanuel.

° Isaiah vii, 14.

* Or, *his name shall be called.*

Lord, given by Divine command, lays a firm foundation for the trust of the guilty; and opens the most glorious hope to man, even that of SALVATION from the guilt and penalty, from the power and pollution of sin in this life, and beyond it a resurrection from the dead, immortality, and eternal felicity.

Verse 22. *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, &c.*—By this we are not to understand that the end of Christ's being born of a virgin was to fulfil the prediction; but that the event exactly corresponded to the prophecy, and was intended to fulfil it, with reference to the great purpose of our salvation, anciently promised by the prophets, and in the mode which had been revealed to them. The prediction declares that a certain event would take place; and the evangelist assures us, that the very event spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah, that "a virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son," was the birth of Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary: in other words, that not only did an event take place, to which the words of the prophet might be applied, by way of parallel or accommodation, but that the prophecy was now fulfilled in a strict and literal sense. Some of those commentators who contend that the quotations adduced from the prophets by St. Matthew and other writers of the New Testament, are used as apposite illustrations, in the same manner as passages from the Greek and Latin classics by modern writers, will not even except those instances which, like the above, are introduced by the strong formula, *ινα πληρωθη το ρηθεν, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken.* They therefore soften the import of πληροω, to "fulfil," into the occurrence of an event bearing some resemblance to another. Michaelis, however, who adopts this doctrine in part, makes an exception of those passages which are introduced with this form of expression. The fact is, that none of these quotations which appear with this or any other form expressive of *fulfilment* of any part of the Old Testament, can be taken in any other sense than as specified accomplishments of predictions, the sense indeed of which might not in many instances be obvious before they were pointed out by the Spirit of inspiration, and which in some few instances, even then, may be somewhat difficult to trace; but if, as Dr. Owen justly observes, "the same Spirit which dictated the prophecies in the Old Testament, dictated also their interpretation in the New, he surely could best ascertain to whom or to what they were meant to be ultimately applied." If indeed it were the practice with St. Matthew and the evangelists to introduce an apposite application of the moral sentences and weighty sayings of the Old Testament, where it is manifest that no prediction is involved, the case would be altered; but it is not so, for the supposed examples of this practice which have been adduced will not support themselves. Dr. Campbell instances, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," which will be considered in its place, and the conclusion drawn from it refuted. His second instance, when examined, will be found against him. It is taken from the directions as to the paschal lamb, Exodus xii, 46: "None of his bones shall be broken;" which he says is a mere law, not a prophecy; and yet St. John, after speaking of our Lord's legs not being broken upon the cross, says, "For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." But, if this law as to the paschal lamb was designed to constitute it a type, then, from the first, that law looked forward to the circumstance which accomplished the type; and that very circumstance being of a remarkable character was designed to mark out Christ's sacrifice as the true and spiritual passover.—Thus the law, though simply in itself a ceremonial direction, had the nature of a prophecy, and prefigured an event which was literally fulfilled in the antitype to the Jewish paschal sacrifice. Dr. Sykes, indeed, who strongly contends for the principle of accommodation in these cases, urges that it was customary with the Jewish rabbins to apply passages of the Old Testament in a sense very remote from that of the original author; but Dr. Marsh makes a sufficient reply, when he says that he has produced no passages from the Talmud, or from any Jewish commentator, where similar expressions to those above mentioned,—"that it might be fulfilled," &c.,—are used to introduce instances of mere accommodation. In the case of St. Matthew, especially, this theory is in the highest degree absurd; since he wrote more immediately for the conviction of the Jews, and therefore more frequently than the other evangelists quotes the prophecies of the Old Testament, and shows their fulfilment. Had he, therefore, applied the same form of introduction with respect to such prophecies, and to mere rhetorical allusions, he would have defeated his own purpose by perplexing his readers. That which appears to have misled many commentators on this point, is the difficulty of discovering, in several of these quotations, a direct prediction of what related to Messiah in the scope and context of the prophetic discourse from

which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not, till she had brought forth her first-born Son: and he called his name JESUS.

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which it was taken. But this objection has proceeded upon a faulty view of the character and genius of the Hebrew system of prophecy itself. It ought to be remembered, that, in the declarations of the prophets, as Dr. Owen again remarks, there was "a grand and extensive scheme formed by Providence from the first, which consists of different parts, some respecting the temporal, and others the spiritual benefit of mankind; and yet there is a close and intimate connection between them, and upon this are founded the reasons of those abrupt transitions to remote subjects, and quick changes of numbers and persons, &c., so frequent in the prophecies, so that temporal is often introductory to, and significant of the spiritual. For as every temporal blessing, favour, and deliverance, which the Jews obtained, sprang from the mercies of God through Christ; so they became not only preludes to, but also types and pledges of that future deliverance and blessing which he was finally to procure by his birth, actions, and sufferings, for the whole human race." Hence it is, that some prophecies singly and literally apply to Christ; and others in a more spiritual manner are completed in and by him, than in those personal and historical types of him and the affairs of his kingdom, with which the Jewish Scriptures and history abound.

Verse 23. *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, &c.*—This illustrious prophecy was delivered by Isaiah, (chap. vii,) in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, when he and his people were under great apprehensions that the state would be subverted by the invasion of the confederated kings of Israel and Syria. God by the prophet promises deliverance to Ahaz, who appears to have been utterly distrustful in the message of God, and in this spirit to have refused to ask a sign from God, "either in the depth, or in the height above," that is, any natural prodigy within the compass of observation. This he did, secretly trusting in the help of his ally, the king of Assyria, rather than in God; but covering his unbelief with a pretence of not being willing to "tempt the Lord." Upon this the prophet losing sight of Ahaz, and the sign he had refused to ask, turns to the people, "the house of David," and says to them, not to Ahaz, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." This was "a sign" to them, as it was the utterance of a new prophecy and ASSURANCE respecting the coming of Messiah, made under special inspiration; and it was "a sign" or pledge, also, that the house of David, and the kingdom of Judah, should not be destroyed, for they all knew that Messiah was to be the heir and possessor of David's throne, as his descendant; and thus it had in it the nature of "a sign," encouraging for the occasion, although the Messiah was not to be born till a distant period, beside that the prophecy was a new disclosure respecting him, and unveiled the most important particulars concerning him: as, 1. That he should be born of a virgin, then for the first time explicitly announced, although intimated in the first promise, where he is called the seed of the woman. 2. That he should be a Divine person, according to his name, "Emmanuel, God with us." 3. That he should also be truly a man, being fed from a state of childhood with the common meats of the land, until he attained maturity, —"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know," or till he shall know, "to refuse the evil, and choose the good;" that is, in the Hebrew mode of speaking, till he is grown up to the age of discernment. Some suppose that this allusion to butter and honey was an assurance that the land should remain cultivated, and yield food for its inhabitants, till the time of his birth. But I am inclined to think that this part of the prediction is to be taken as an indication of the lowly state in which this wondrous personage was to pass his youth. Butter, the *hemah* of Scripture, is probably the same as the *haymak* of the Arabs, which is cream produced by simmering sheep's milk over a slow fire, which with wild honey was the common food of persons in humble life; and as it is noticed of John the Baptist that his food was "locusts and wild honey," to indicate that he spent his early life in desert solitudes, so of Emmanuel it is thus predicted, that he should spend his childhood and youth in obscurity among a rural and poor people, and not in the palaces of the great, which was the fact. This view receives confirmation from the 22d verse of the same chapter, where for the people to eat butter and honey is placed among the effects of a desolated and wasted state of the country, which no longer afforded them luxuries. So many important particulars respecting the Messiah did this explicit prophecy contain. What man but a prophet inspired of God could have foreseen an event not only so improbable, but apparently impossible, and that seven hundred years before it took place? Here is the express prophecy recorded in the sacred books of the Jews; and no one has ever pretended that it was fulfilled in the case of any human being, but in "the man CHRIST JESUS." The verse which follows,—"For

before the child," or this child, "shall know to refuse the evil, or to choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest," that is, Israel and Syria, "shall be forsaken of both her kings," may be understood to signify, that within that period of time in which this or any other child comes to years of understanding, the two invading kings should be destroyed, as they were soon afterward, by the king of Assyria; or with others, we may understand it to be a distinct prophecy, and that the child now spoken of and pointed to was the prophet's own son, whom he was commanded to take with him to meet Ahaz, Isaiah vii, 3. For why this child was taken by the prophet, by express command, on such an occasion, as Dr. Kennicott observes, but that something remarkable was to be said of him, does not otherwise appear.

To so striking a fulfilment of this prophecy in our Lord, the Jews object, that the word עַלְמָה is not to be strictly translated *a virgin*; to which the answer is conclusive, that it is so rendered in their own Septuagint, which translation was made three hundred years before St. Matthew wrote; and, although it is rendered *νεανις, a young girl*, and not *παρθενος, a virgin*, by the Jews, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian, this was subsequently to the Christian era, and to serve the cause of their own unbelief. They also interpret the prophecy, as the modern Socinians, of a young woman then a virgin being married, and bringing forth a child in the ordinary way; which could be no such extraordinary matter, as to be introduced so emphatically: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive!" &c.: and could be no "*sign*," or miracle denoting a supernatural interposition to confirm the hope of "the house of David."

They shall call his name Emmanuel, &c. —This is not a proper name, but a name of description; and the phrase, "they shall call his name," is the same as "he shall be called," as it is expressed in some of the earlier versions; and to be called is in the Hebrew idiom *to be;* as "my house shall *be called* a house of prayer;" that is, it shall be so.—Christ is therefore God, and "*God with us*," otherwise he could not be Jesus, the Saviour; and so the real name which was given to our Lord implies all that is expressed by his prophetic designation.

The high import of the term Emmanuel is attempted to be sunk, by the Unitarians, into a mere intimation that "God would be with the Jews," to deliver them from their enemies; but whoever follows those sections of Isaiah's prophecies which succeed each other in the 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of his prophecy, will perceive that, with him, it was a designation which implies positive Deity. For not only immediately after (viii, 8) is the land of Judah called Emmanuel's land, and so he is held forth as ITS LORD and Owner; but, with the same course of thought in his mind, and with evident reference to the child to be born of a virgin, the prophet exclaims, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Such, with Isaiah, were the glorious and Divine characters of Emmanuel.

This descriptive title of our Lord, then, related primarily to the union of the Divine nature with ours; a union so strict as to be PERSONAL, though without confusion of the SUBSTANCE, which remained, and must for ever remain, distinct, though hypostatically ONE. This is a mystery which reason cannot now, and perhaps never may, comprehend; not because it is contrary to it, but manifestly above it. It is no more contrary to it, than the union of our own body and soul, things of a quite different, and even of a contrary essence, in one person; and that it is above reason arises from this, that we have exceedingly imperfect and inadequate views of human nature itself, much more of the Divine.—Necessarily we must be so acquainted with each as to prove that such a union as the Divine and human natures in the person of the one Christ is contrary to some principle in either, of which we have full and adequate knowledge, before we can decide the question on natural principles; a presumption of which no reasonable, not to say modest man can be guilty. Our faith in these high mysteries rests therefore upon the testimony of God, as collected from the plain unwarped meaning of his own revelation. But the name Emmanuel, God with us, does not simply indicate this mysterious fact. The greatest consequences depend upon it. We are assured thereby of the condescension of God to MAN, even in his "low estate." The gracious and benevolent conduct of our Lord to mankind, during his sojourn on earth, was the public visible exhibition of the same sympathies and affections which he feels toward us, now he has entered into his glory; and, beside this, it was this peculiar circumstance, that he was truly God in our nature, which gave that grand and boundless consideration to his vicarious sufferings, which has rendered it "righteous" in God to remit the sins of all who penitently trust in his merit; while his remaining God and man for ever personally united affords us the pledge of that inconceivable exaltation of human nature which shall take place, as to the righteous, at his second advent. For then these vile bodies are to be made like unto his glorious body, and our souls to undergo that vast change which the New Testament describes by the indefinite, but for that reason the most expressive term which could be used,—"*glorification.*" He will therefore be "God with us," and we shall

be with him, as the Head of glorified human nature, for ever. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

On this whole account it may be remarked, that the birth of Christ of a pure virgin was the commencement of the completion of that series of illustrious predictions which began to be delivered to the patriarchs, and were proclaimed to the Jewish Church in increasing number and variety by the Hebrew prophets, until the close of that singular succession of inspired men in the person of Malachi. That the Christ should be born of a virgin, was obscurely intimated in that first promise of grace on which the mercy of God permitted guilty and penitent man to hope. He was then announced as "the Seed of the woman,"—a singular mode of expression, which probably from the beginning served to awaken attention and inquiry; but it was expressly declared that he should be born of a virgin in that passage from Isaiah which has been already considered. The intimate connection which exists between this important circumstance and the whole plan of our redemption, is at once seen by those who hold the true scriptural doctrine of our Lord's sacrificial and vicarious death; and every effort is therefore made to discredit the doctrine by those who deny Christ's death to be a proper atonement for sin. For, since they reject the atonement, they can find no reason for the miraculous conception; and regarding it, therefore, as an incumbrance to the history of Christ, they have zealously, though vainly, and in opposition to all evidence, endeavoured to prove that those portions of the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke which treat of it are additions of later times. But all the parts of truth must be consistent with each other; and as the sacrificial character of the death of Christ will be found indelibly stamped upon a hundred unquestioned passages, both of the Old and the New Testaments, it follows that he must have been "without spot," absolutely without sin, which no human being ever was, or could be, who came into the world in the ordinary manner. By natural generation we are connected with Adam, whom St. Paul teaches us to consider as the fountain of sin and death to all his posterity; but the human nature of our Lord came not down the stream which issued from that fountain. By being formed and nourished in the womb of the virgin, he partook of human nature with as much truth, as if he had been begotten of man; but, being conceived of the Holy Ghost, his real human nature was, *ab origine*, spotless and unpolluted, having no seeds of evil in it, nor placed under those penal relations to the first Adam, by which all his posterity became separated and alien from that life of God which is the principle of all true holiness. Thus was the human nature of our Lord "holy, harmless, and separate from sinners," in its original condition and relations, as well as by his subsequent practice; and thus was that which was born of Mary called by the angel, in St. Luke, "a holy thing." His example was therefore that of a *perfect* man, and his sacrifice that of a "Lamb without spot;" so that he could die vicariously, that is, in the place of others, the merit of his death being transferable, in consequence of his not being held to that penalty. He died, "the JUST for the UNJUST, that he might bring us to God." See note on Luke i, 35.

Verse 25. *Her first-born Son.*—The first son was, among the Jews, called "*the first-born*," whether any more sons were brought forth afterward or not; so that nothing can be inferred from this passage, one way or the other, as to the question whether Mary had any other child. The object of the evangelist was to show that she had none before Jesus, and that he was born of her, still being a virgin. It is for the latter reason that he refers to Joseph's continency. The doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity is a figment of later times, founded neither upon Scripture, nor uniform tradition, nor the reason of the case.

CHAPTER II.

1 *The wise men out of the east are directed to Christ by a star.* 11 *They worship him, and offer their presents.* 14 *Joseph fleeth into Egypt, with Jesus and his mother.* 16 *Herod slayeth the children:* 20 *Himself dieth.* 23 *Christ is brought back again into Galilee to Nazareth.*

1 Now when [a] Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

[a] St. Luke, chap. ii, 6.

CHAPTER II. Verse 1. *Bethlehem of Judea, &c.*—About six miles from Jerusalem, and so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem, in the tribe of Zebulon.

2 Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

In the days of Herod the king.—The mention of Herod renders it necessary to connect his history with that of the Jews after their return from captivity in Babylon. This took place five hundred and thirty-five years before the birth of Christ. The Jews continued under the protection of the kings of Persia for two hundred years; in the early part of which period they were ruled by governors of their own nation, appointed by the Persian court; and in the latter the high priests were deputed to that office. The Persian empire was subverted by Alexander the Great, on whose death the Seleucidæ reigned in Syria, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. The provinces of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine were wrested from the Ptolemies by Antiochus the Great, king of Syria. His son, Antiochus Epiphanes, conquered Egypt, and then made a furious attack upon the Jews, 170 years before Christ, plundered Jerusalem, polluted the temple, destroyed forty thousand of the inhabitants, and a short time afterward renewed his atrocities, and, being a bitter persecuting pagan, he abolished, as far as he was able, the worship of God, and consecrated the temple to Jupiter Olympus. These acts of outrage and cruelty called forth the pious patriotism of the celebrated family of the Maccabees, who, after the most severe and noble struggles, in which they were well supported by the devoted heroism of the Jews, succeeded in expelling the Syrians. This was the rise of the Asmonean family, as the Maccabees were also called, from an ancestor of the name of Asmoneus; and Judas Maccabæus, who united the high priesthood with the supreme government, formed an alliance with the Romans, the better to defend the new commonwealth which his valour had founded. The successors of Judas were Jonathan, Simon, John Hyrcanus, who subdued the Idumæans, Aristobulus, who assumed the title of king, Alexander Janæus, Alexandra his widow, Aristobulus the younger son, deposed by Pompey, who restored Hyrcanus the elder son, but forbade the use of the diadem, and made the nation tributary to the Romans. The prime minister of this Hyrcanus, the last of the Asmonean family, was Antipater, an Idumæan or Edomite, who, having ingratiated himself with the Romans, obtained from them for his son Herod, afterward called the Great, the government of Galilee; and Herod having married Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, with much opposition and violence, and by the favour of Mark Antony, took possession of the kingdom of Judea, and reigned thirty-four years. He died within two years after the real time of the birth of Christ, and soon after the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem. The distribution of his kingdom by his will was confirmed by Augustus Cesar. Archelaus had Judea; Herod Antipas the tetrarchy of Iturea and Trachonitis. Herod Philip appears to have been left in a private station. The names of these princes appear in the gospels. Archelaus was reigning when Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt. Herod Antipas the tetrarch, or, by courtesy, the king of Galilee, is several times mentioned, Matthew xiv, 1, 3, 6; Mark vi, 14; Luke iii, 1, 19; and to him our Lord was sent by Pilate. Philip is mentioned Luke iii, 1. Herodias was the wife of Herod Philip, and was married to Herod Antipas during the lifetime of her husband; which proved the occasion of the murder of John the Baptist, Matt. xiv, 3–10. The Herod Agrippa mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles was a grandson of Herod the Great, and brother of Herodias. The Emperor Caligula made him tetrarch of Trachonitis and Abilene, to which Claudius added the kingdom of Judea. He it was that put James the apostle to death, Acts xii, 1, 2; and was mortally smitten of God, in the height of his pride, at Cesarea, Acts xii, 20. On his death, a Roman governor was again appointed to Judea. His son, Agrippa the second, succeeded to the tetrarchies of Trachonitis and Abilene. Before this Agrippa St. Paul delivered his reasons for becoming a Christian.

Wise men from the east.—Μαγοι απο ανατολων, *magi* from the east; which word, as being descriptive of a certain class of eastern sages, ought to have been retained in the translation. It was the title given by the ancient Persians to their philosophers. They chiefly cultivated theology and politics according to Aristotle; but Philo describes them also as diligent inquirers into nature, and given up to contemplation. They anciently admitted the dualistic system, or the doctrine of two principles, one the author of good, the other of evil, which were represented by light and darkness. They abhorred images, but adored fire as emblematical of the beneficent Deity. Many of them, or of those who passed under that name, were greatly addicted also to astrology and divination. During the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, the Persian sages who came into that country with Cyrus probably became acquainted with the sacred books of the Hebrews, and, under the influence of Zoroaster, it is supposed that the Magian religion was greatly reformed, and brought nearer to the Jewish. The Zendavesta, their sacred book, is full of passages from the writings of Moses. The term magi was, however, at length

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethle-

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generally used, not only in Persia, but in Chaldea, Armenia, Arabia, and different parts of Asia, to distinguish philosophers; and their religious system, no doubt, greatly varied in all these countries, and at different periods. Attempts have been made to fix the country from which the magi mentioned in the text came, from the kind of gifts they presented; but this affords no satisfactory illustration, as the precious gums, though natives of Arabia, were used throughout the east, as presents of honour to distinguished personages. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, think that they came from Arabia, which is called "the east," in Judges vi, 3; Job i, 3; whereas Chaldea, the country assigned to them by others is somewhat to the north of Judea. Of whatever country they were, they are injured by being supposed to be astrologers. They were manifestly holy men and worshippers of the true God, and favoured with special revelations from him. That the east was celebrated for wisdom in ancient times, appears from Solomon's wisdom being said to excel "the wisdom of the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt," 1 Kings iv, 30.

Verse 2. *His star in the east.*—Many conjectures have been offered as to this appearance; as, that it was the glory of the Shechinah; the Holy Spirit; an angel; a new star in the heavens; or a comet. It appears to have been a meteor, bearing the appearance of a bright star, and was manifestly supernatural, and connected as to its import with some revelation made to them of the birth of the Messiah. How otherwise should it have guided them to the very house where "the young child was?" and how, without a revelation, should they have known its significancy as indicating the birth of "the king of the Jews?" The sign was, however, appropriate, as among the ancients the appearance of a star was considered the forerunner of the birth of great princes. By them, also, bright meteors, having a stellar appearance, were denominated stars. So Homer uses the word ἀστερὰ in Illiad Δ 75, and Virgil *stella*, Æneid. ii. 693.

Verse 3. *When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled.*—Herod was not only by nature a suspicious man, but he knew that he was abhorred of the Jews as a foreigner; and was therefore moved with strong apprehension lest this recently born child, thus publicly announced as the king of the Jews and the heir of David's throne, should excite a sedition which might deprive him of his kingdom. *And all Jerusalem with him*, as knowing his fierce and cruel temper, and fearing that his rage might break forth as it had done on several former occasions, in acts of indiscriminate cruelty.

The chief priests and scribes.—He convenes a solemn assembly of the chief priests, including the high priest, his deputy, and the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests. The Hebrew word for *scribe*, סֹפֵר, is derived from a root which signifies *to number*, from which probably comes our word *cypher*. The rendering in Greek is γραμματευς, from γραμμα, a letter: so that the scribes were employed in writings, numbers, accounts, and in transcribing and interpreting the books of the law; and the word is used both for those who were employed about any kind of civil writings or records, or those whose business it was to transcribe, study, and explain the Scriptures. The scribes mentioned in the New Testament were all of the latter class, and are the same as the νομικοι, "lawyers," sometimes also mentioned. They were students and teachers of the law, and were particularly skilled in the traditions which at that time were held in such reverence. (See note on chap. v, 20.) The assembly convened by Herod was therefore one of the greatest authority; and Divine Providence so ordered it, that they should give the opinion of the Jewish Church as to the sense of that important prophecy in Micah, which they adduce in answer to Herod's inquiry, *where the Christ should be born.* It follows from Herod's question and the answer of the council, that it was at that time received among the Jews, that the Christ should not make his appearance among them by a descent from heaven, but be born of woman; which they were probably led the more fully to expect, from the prophecy of Isaiah above noticed.

Verse 5. *In Bethlehem of Judea.*—The residence of Joseph was at Nazareth, more than fifty miles distant; and Mary being far advanced in pregnancy, nothing was more unlikely than that our Lord should be born at Bethlehem, and especially as no private business called them thither. This event was brought about through means over which they had no control. The Emperor Augustus ordered a census of his empire to be taken, including such nominally independent states as Judea; and this laid Joseph and Mary under the necessity of repairing without delay to Bethlehem, because they were both "of the house and lineage of David," and the enrolments of Judea were made of every one according to his tribe, and city, and family. So remarkably does God accomplish his pur

hem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 [b]And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall *rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they

[b] Micah v, 2; John vii, 41.

* Or, *feed.*

poses, without interference with the free agency of man; and so strikingly does this, and many similar events, display the depth of that wisdom of God which "sweetly ordereth all things." Events work at greater distances from each other than human knowledge can discern; and although no human power can establish a connection between them, yet they infallibly co-operate to accomplish the purposes of God.

Verse 6. *And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, &c.*—This quotation agrees neither with the Hebrew, nor the Septuagint; for which difference, it has been remarked, the council of priests and not the evangelist was responsible. If indeed the quotation was given by St. Matthew in these exact words, this view is sufficiently satisfactory; and as they no doubt rendered the passage from the Hebrew to Herod, either in Greek or the Palestinian dialect, it is to be regarded as their extemporaneous translation, and gives the sense of the Hebrew with sufficient accuracy. But if St. Matthew quotes the passage from the prophet his variations stand on the same ground as all others which occur in his gospel, and in those of the following evangelists. With respect to these variations, they are not always important; for it may be generally observed, says Bishop Randolph, that, on comparing them, "it will appear how nearly the citations in the New Testament agree with the original Hebrew, though they sometimes quote from the Septuagint, and perhaps other translations or paraphrases." The passage, as it stands in Micah v, 2, is, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel." For "Bethlehem Ephratah" St. Matthew has, "Bethlehem in the land of Juda," which is but another designation of the same town. In the Old Testament it has the name of Bethlehem Judah; Judges xvii, 7. The principal variation is in the negative, *οὐδαμως*, "*by no means* the least," whereas our translation makes the Prophet Micah to say, "*Though* thou be little." *Though*, however, is not in the Hebrew, which may be read interrogatively, "Art thou little?" Thus, in the Syriac translation, we have, "*num parva es?*" while the Arabic uses the negative, "*nequaquam es minima*," and so agrees with the *sense* of the Hebrew, which manifestly is, that Bethlehem, although an obscure town, was to be dignified by the birth of Messiah. "The thousands of Judah," is rendered in Matthew *the princes of Judah*, which is only another mode of expressing the same thing; for the tribes were divided into thousands, over every one of which was placed a PRINCE, or chief. Thus the real agreement of St. Matthew with the Hebrew is manifest. It is, however, here to be noticed, that the whole prophecy in Micah is not adduced; for it was the custom of the Jews, when quoting their Scriptures for argument or illustration, to cite only the introductory parts of a section to which they made reference, supposing those to whom they spoke or wrote to be familiar with the whole, as indeed they generally were. Though, therefore, the quotation does not give the complete prophecy, we are referred by it to the whole section in which it stands, which extends through several verses, and is an illustrious revelation of the Divinity and official glory of that prince of Judah, who was indeed to be born in Bethlehem, but whose "goings forth were of old, even from everlasting."

"This prophecy of Micah," says Dr. Hales, "is perhaps the most important single prophecy in the Old Testament, and the most comprehensive, respecting the personal character of the Messiah, and his successive manifestation to the world. It crowns the whole chain of prophecies descriptive of the several limitations of the blessed Seed of the woman, to the line of Shem, to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the tribe of Judah, and to the royal house of David, here terminating in his birth at Bethlehem, 'the city of David.' It carefully distinguishes his human nativity from his eternal generation; foretells the rejection of the Israelites and Jews for a season, their final restoration, and the universal peace destined to prevail throughout the earth in 'the regeneration.' It forms, therefore, the basis of the New Testament; which begins with his human birth at Bethlehem, the miraculous circumstances of which are recorded in the introductions of Matthew's and Luke's gospels; his eternal generation, as the ORACLE, or WISDOM, in the sublime introduction of John's

departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they *presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a

* Or, *offered.*

gospel; his prophetic character and second coming, illustrated in the four gospels and the epistles; ending with a prediction of the speedy approach of the latter, in the Apocalypse, Rev. xxii, 20."

Verse 9. *And, lo, the star, which they saw, in the east, &c.*—If the star guided them the whole way to Judea, which is not to be inferred from the history, it disappeared upon their entrance into Judea, and left them to their own judgment; and, as they were in search of him who was born "king of the Jews," they naturally directed their course to the metropolis. It was upon their departure from Jerusalem to Bethlehem that the star again appeared; and at this, according to our version, "*they rejoiced with exceeding great joy,*" which is an excellent translation of εχαρησαν χαραν μεγαλην σφοδρα, where, as in passages which sometimes occur in Greek and Latin authors, similar words are used to denote emphasis and excess.

Verse 11. *And fell down, and worshipped him.*—The same Greek word is used to express both Divine worship and the prostrate homage which the people of the east paid to their kings. Thus Xenophon, describing the respect paid to Cyrus by his subjects, says, "When the people saw him, παντες προσεκυνησαν, they all worshipped him." Our own word *worship*, as formerly used, had this double sense. In this case the magi paid our Lord ROYAL homage; but whether with any reference also to his Divinity does not so clearly appear as some of the fathers would have it understood. And yet, as the fact of Messiah having been born was made known to them by a Divine revelation, intimations of his Divinity might also be given, and their worship be paid to him under the highest character. As for the gifts presented, *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*, it may be remarked, that no person in ancient times in those countries appeared before a superior without a present. These were of the most costly kind, and such only as were presented to the greatest personages. That these magi were men of rank as well as philosophers, is the voice of tradition. Thus in their lower sense and earliest application were those prophecies fulfilled,—

"Nations shall come to thy *light*,
And princes to the brightness of *thy rising*:
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer *gifts*."

Opened their treasures.—That is, the packages and vessels which contained them; the word being applied, not to the contents, but to the containing receptacle. Thus Cicero calls memory "the *treasure* of all things;" and Virgil the vessels in which honey is preserved,

servataque mella thesauris.

Several very important ends were answered by the visit of the magi. It showed that the expectation of the appearance of Messiah about that time was not only entertained by Jews, but by Gentiles; and therefore that the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures were not the only sources of information on that interesting subject. Either several of the same prophecies had been transmitted by the heads of those families which had branched off from the common Abrahamic stock, or the relics of the ten tribes in different eastern countries had communicated those annunciations of Messiah contained in the Pentateuch; or the proselytes, "the strangers" who occasionally went up to worship God at Jerusalem, circulated the leading doctrines and hopes of the Jewish Church; or revelations were occasionally made on the subject of "the great salvation of God" to pious Gentiles in different places and at different times. How else shall we account for so general an expectation of the appearance of the great Restorer, which certainly existed? "For," says Suetonius, "an ancient and settled persuasion prevailed throughout the east, that the fates had decreed some one to proceed from Judea, who would attain universal empire." How also shall we account for the Sibylline prophecies which Virgil has embodied in his Pollio, and which bear so striking a resemblance to some of the predictions of Isaiah, as to the glorious and peaceful reign of Messiah, and the great changes to be wrought in his days in the state of society? And, finally, how are we to account for the journey of these magi from the east? The simple circumstance of the appearance of an extraordinary meteor could not alone indicate that the Messiah, the king of the Jews, was already born; a direct verbal revelation must be supposed, answering no doubt to the general information previously existing among them, and communicating the intelligence that he whom they expected was in fact born, and that he was born in Judea.

dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet,

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Of this revelation the appearance of the star was the supernatural sign, which became still more indubitable when it went before them and directed their steps to Bethlehem.—Another end answered by this event was, that the public inquiry made by these strangers for "the king of the Jews," whom they knew to have been recently born, turned the attention of the inhabitants of the Jewish metropolis to the fact of his birth, which probably they then for the first time heard; the annunciation of the shepherds being probably as yet confined to the neighbourhood in which it took place. But a still higher purpose was, to bring forth a public testimony from the highest ecclesiastical and theological authority among the Jews as to the birth place of Messiah having been previously recorded by one of their own prophets to be Bethlehem of Judah, and to show that it was a matter of universal agreement among them, that that illustrious prophecy, in all its parts, belonged to Messiah, and consequently that the Christ of prophecy stood in opposition to those low conceptions which they afterward indulged as to the simple humanity of the Messiah, and were contradicted by a passage which attributes positive Divinity as well as real humanity to him, and which, in full council, and in answer to the question of Herod their king, they declared to be a prophecy of the Christ. To the Messiah, as described by Micah, the Messiah which the Jews have ever expected does not answer; but to the Messiah of this prophecy our blessed Lord is the exact counterpart; he was born in Bethlehem, and yet his "goings forth have been from the days of eternity." The whole history is also beautifully instructive, as one of those numerous instances with which the Scriptures abound of the manner in which an unseen, but ever-watchful, ever-active power overrules the purposes of men, even when they are opposed to that issue which is evolved by unanticipated circumstances, and frustrates equally their subtlety and their power. Herod, in his own true character of malignant cunning, wishes to make the magi the instruments of conveying to him the intelligence of this new-born heir of the throne of David, and affects to partake of their joy, and to be ready to do him homage; but, warned of God, they depart home by another route, and thus their safety is provided for, which might have been compromised by an act of constructive treason, in acknowledging another king beside him; while his sanguinary purpose was delayed, to give the holy family time to hasten down to Egypt, beyond the reach of his power; for which journey the gifts of the wise men afforded a seasonable, and, as it appears, an abundant supply. "There is no counsel against the Lord."

Verse 14. *And departed into Egypt.*—From the time of the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, the Jews were settled in great numbers in its principal cities, and especially in Alexandria. There they established their own worship, and maintained a constant intercourse with their own countrymen in Judea. Joseph would therefore naturally reside among his own people during his stay in Egypt, and, being out of Herod's jurisdiction, was safe.

Verse 15. *Out of Egypt have I called my son.*—This is cited from Hosea xi, 1; and has been often adduced by those who consider the quotations from the Old Testament in the evangelists as mere accommodated allusions, founded upon some vague and undesigned resemblances, as a pregnant proof of their theory. But it is here to be recollected that the evangelist introduces the quotation with the formula, "that it might be fulfilled," as in chap. i, 22, 23, on which see the note.—Now this formula is just as appropriate when a type is referred to, as a prophecy; for when the type is not one of human fancy, but of Divine appointment, in each case there is an accomplishment, or completion; because a type is predictive, and differs only from a prophecy in form. The passage, as it stands in Hosea, is, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt;" and, as these words were spoken of the people Israel, the question is, whether, in any respects, the people Israel bore a typical character? This must be granted, because nothing is more certain, both from the style of the Hebrew prophets, and from the writings of St. Paul, than that Israel "after the flesh" is often made the type of "the Israel of God," or of the Christian Church; and the deliverance of the former from Egypt the type of our redemption by Christ. It will be pertinent next to inquire, whether by the Prophet Hosea the term Israel is not sometimes used in a sense not literal, and under which, therefore, some religious mystery is contained. Of this we

saying, [c] Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the

[c] Hosea, chap. xi, 1.

have an instance in chap. xii, 3–6: "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him.—Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually." Here, indeed, there is not a typical use of the real Jacob or Israel; but the people Israel are personated and identified with their progenior, and under that character, as Israel, "a prince which had power with God," they are exhorted, as though they had been Jacob or Israel himself, to "turn to God," and to "wait on him continually," in order to prevail. This is sufficient to prove, that this prophet does not always confine himself to one simple view in the use of the term Israel. But it will throw still greater light upon the subject, if we consider that the people Israel are sometimes spoken of as *one person*, and called God's "son," and his "first-born," which indicates that Israel was intended to be in some particulars the type of some individual: and who could this be but "the Son," and "the First-born" of God, the Messiah? To which we may add this strong confirmation, that the Messiah himself is by the prophets called Israel, doubtless for this reason, for no other can be assigned, that he was, in some respects or other, typified by the people Israel. Thus, in Isaiah, xlix, 3, where Jehovah is introduced speaking to Messiah, he says, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;" and Isa. xlii, 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," is, in the Septuagint, "Jacob my servant —and Israel mine elect." Here too the Jewish uninspired writers afford a proof that they understood the Messiah to be typified by Israel. Thus Dr. Alix remarks that the author of *Midrash Tehillim* on Psalm ii, 7, says, "The mysteries of the King Messiah are declared in the law, the prophets, and the Hagiographa." In the law it is written, Exodus iv, 22, "Israel is my Son, even my first-born." Hence Rabbi Nathan in *Schemoth Rabba* on those words speaks thus: "As I made Jacob my first-born, Exodus iv, 22, so have I made Messiah my first-born, as it is said, Psalm lxxxix, 27, 'I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.'" Thus, then, as we find Messiah called Jacob and Israel, and no other reason can be assigned for this but that something in the case and history of the people of Israel was realized in him, in the sense of correspondence with an instituted type, the words of Hosea were intended to indicate, at least in one respect, in what the type consisted, and those of the evangelist how the type was "fulfilled in him." Israel was in Egypt subject to a foreign power, and in a lowly state; but was brought out from thence, and, after various trials and wanderings in the desert, was raised to dominion and glory among the nations. So our Lord was for a time in Egypt, in subjection to a foreign dominion, and in a lowly condition; but was called from thence, that, after his season of trial and humiliation, he might be exalted to glory and universal dominion. It is in these particulars that the type was fulfilled. Israel the typical son, and Jesus the true Son, were each called out of Egypt, by special interposition of God, to accomplish his great purposes, and to be raised to honour, and invested with dominion. We may therefore conclude that the Holy Spirit first dictated the passage quoted to Hosea, and then directed St. Matthew to refer the call of Christ out of Egypt to the same passage, as an accomplishment of it, in order to explain in what the typical character of Israel in reference to Christ consisted, and to convince the Jews by this type that the humiliation and glory of the Messiah were as much connected, in the intention of God, as the humiliation of the ancient Israel, and the glory to which that people were afterward conducted. Thus the words of the prophet, which had always a mystical reference to Christ, were in the strict sense FULFILLED. With respect to this passage it may, however, be observed that Doddridge, following earlier commentators inclines to the opinion that the words are in the strictest sense a prophecy, and are to be read, "Though Israel be a child that is wayward and perverse, yet I have loved him, and WILL CALL my Son out of Egypt;" the past being used for the future, as is frequent in the prophetic writings. The sense would then be, that, notwithstanding the unworthiness of Israel, yet the compassion of God would still extend to them through the Messiah, and that after having been preserved from Herod, he would be called out of Egypt to accomplish their salvation.

Verse 16. *Slew all the children.*—That is, all the *male children*; τους παιδας. This act, however barbarous, was quite accordant with the malignant character of Herod, who, especially when under the influence of political jealousy, knowing how much he was hated by the Jews, gave full range to his sanguinary temper. He had imbrued his hands in the

time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by [d] Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

[d] Jeremiah, chap. xxxi, 15.

blood of his own sons, and his wife, and many others; and, though tormented in his last days by remorse and fear, yet even on his deathbed he sent for all the considerable Jews of Jericho, where he then was, and had them shut up in the circus, giving orders that they should be slain as soon as he expired, that he might have a lamentation at his death. The order was disobeyed; but it marks the character of this unhappy man of blood, with whom departed the sceptre finally from Judah.—Josephus does not mention this slaughter of the children by Herod. This may be accounted for probably because of the slight impression which this event would produce among the Jews, accustomed to witness in Herod's proceedings acts of superior atrocity; and also because it was done in an obscure part of the country, and was unconnected with any political event. The memory of it would be preserved among Christians, as connected with the early history of their Lord; but a Jew like Josephus, writing near a century afterward, was likely to overlook it. Beside this, Josephus professes to take the greatest part of his account of Herod's actions from Nicolaus of Damascus, whom he acknowledges to have written with partiality in Herod's favour, omitting many of his cruelties. There was nothing in this matter, barbarous as it was, to give it a prominent place in heathen or Jewish record; nevertheless, it is adverted to by Macrobius, a heathen author of the fourth century, adduced by Lardner, but only to introduce one of the witticisms of Augustus, the Roman emperor. "*Melius est Herodis* porcum *esse*, *quam* filium."—"It is better to be Herod's *swine*, than his *son*;" alluding to the Jewish abstinence from swine's flesh. The remark of Augustus applied, however, to Herod's murder of his sons, though Macrobius joins with this the distinct tragedy of Bethlehem, to which only his words can refer: "Those male infants within two years old, which Herod, the king of the Jews, ordered to be slain in Syria." This event is noticed in a rabbinical work called *Toldath Jeshu*,—"And the king gave orders for putting to death every infant to be found in Bethlehem."

Verse 18. *In Rama was there a voice heard, &c.*—This quotation more nearly agrees with the Hebrew than with the present copies of the Septuagint; the variation is, however, unimportant. Rama was near Bethlehem, though in the tribe of Benjamin, near which Rachel was buried:—"And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." Here the captives were assembled, to be led away to Babylon, after the land and the cities had been wasted by war. Jeremiah had predicted all this, and, by an elegant poetic creation, brings forth Rachel, one of the common mothers of the people, thus slaughtered and led away captive, out of her tomb, bitterly lamenting the loss of her children; and then comforts her with the promise of the return of the captives from Babylon; Jeremiah xxxi, 15, 16. This fine passage has also been thought a mere accommodation, as quoted by St. Matthew; and, as the slaughter of the innocents took place near the tomb of Rachel, she might, it is thought, be introduced in the same poetical spirit by the evangelists, as lamenting this new calamity. St. Matthew, however, does not write poetically, but with that historical simplicity which renders it very unlikely that he should make such an application of the passage, which indeed could only be suggested by a glowing fancy, if no prophetic reference had been couched under it. Nor is the remark of Whitby and some others, who reject the doctrine of accommodation generally, of any weight, that the form of introducing the quotation is not ινα πληρωθη, *that it might be fulfilled*, but τοτε επληρωθη, *then was fulfilled*; meaning, "Then that happened which gave a more full completion to the words of Jeremiah:" for if the words of Jeremiah should be considered as a prediction of the distress to be brought upon the Jewish mothers of his day, personified by Rachel, by the slaughtering and the leading away their children into captivity by the Babylonian army; still this prophecy may rank among a large class of predictions which have an application to two or more events; and the heart-rending affliction of the mothers at Bethlehem and its borders was the second event to which the prophecy of Jeremiah looked, and that with striking propriety; since the scene was laid in the same tract of country, and the event was rendered equally moving by the cries and lamentations of bereaved mothers. The prophecy was therefore truly said by St. Matthew to have been "*fulfilled*" in its originally designed *ultimate* application. There is a much better reason than that given by Whitby for the change in

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

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the formula from, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled," to, "Then was fulfilled;" for, in the former instances of the birth of Christ, and his call out of Egypt, there was a Divine agency employed; something "done" by God which fulfilled his own predictions; but in this slaughter the only agency was that of a wicked and infuriated despot.

Because they are not.—Οτι ουκ εισι, a phrase which equally applies to the loss of Rachel's children, whether by captivity or by the sword,—*they were not* to her. When used to express death, it does not import annihilation; for those Greek writers use the phrase who allow expressly, says Grotius, that the soul survives. Philo the Jew uses the same phrase for death.

Verse 22. *That Archelaus did reign.*—He succeeded Herod only in Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, as *ethnarch*, a title inferior to king, though that title frequently was given in courtesy to sovereigns of every degree.—Galilee was under Herod Antipas, from whom there was less apprehension of inquiry or danger. (See note on verse 1.) Under Divine direction Joseph therefore repaired to Nazareth; for which also there was another reason beside his safety, which is mentioned in the next verse.

The parts of Galilee.—Galilee was the country formerly occupied by the tribes of Issachar, Zebulon, Naphtali, and part of Asher; and was most honoured by our Lord's presence. It was bounded on the south by Samaria, on the west and north by "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," and on the east by the countries of Abilene and Iturea. Josephus describes it as fruitful and well cultivated, abounding in towns and villages, and exceedingly populous. The dialect and accent of the Galileans somewhat differed from that of the Jews in other parts, and hence Peter, Matthew xxvi, 73, was by his speech known to be of that province.

Verse 23. *He shall be called a Nazarene.*—No such passage occurs in the Old Testament, nor can St. Matthew refer to any particular text, because he does not refer to any particular prophet; for his phrase is, "that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by THE PROPHETS," in the plural; so that something was thus accomplished in Christ, to which all the prophets gave concurrent testimony.—Now it is plain that they all agree that he should be "despised" as well as "rejected" of men; that he should be an object of contumely and reproach, and therefore, as Whitby well remarks, "the angel sent him to this contemptible place, that he might have a name of infamy put upon him." He shall be called mean and contemptible, as the root of the word signifies, as well as separated. How Nazareth was esteemed, we learn from the words of the mild Nathanael,—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and the title Nazarene has been, by Jews and other enemies, always given in contempt to our Saviour and his disciples. All the other speculations of commentators on this designation appear to be fanciful and groundless.

CHAPTER III.

1 *John preacheth: his office, life, and baptism.* 7 *He reprehendeth the Pharisees,* 13 *and baptizeth Christ in Jordan.*

1 In those days came [a] John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

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[a] Malachi, chap. iii, 1.

CHAPTER III. Verse 1. *In those days.*—That is, while Jesus yet remained dwelling in Nazareth, where he continued till near his entrance upon his public ministry.

Preaching.—The word signifies *to publish* or *proclaim* any thing as a public officer, commissioned and warranted by lawful authority. John the Baptist was God's com-

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, [b]The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment

b Isaiah xl. 3; Mark i, 3.

missioned herald, or preacher, and did not rush into his service without express authority.

In the wilderness of Judea.—This comprehended, says Lightfoot, the mountains and part of the plain along the Jordan, and also especially the hill country south of Jerusalem. In this hill country, at Hebron, John was born, but retired before his mission, to the neighbouring wilderness, probably of Ziph or Maon. He taught first in that district, and then toward the Jordan, a tract sufficiently desert, yet with a great resort of people, and near large cities. The wildernesses of Canaan were not in every part without towns and cities.

Verse 2. *And saying, Repent ye.*—Although μετανοεω literally signifies, *to change one's opinion*, this does by no means express the force of the word, as it is commonly used in the New Testament. There it signifies to be affected with sorrow and remorse for sin, and to be so fully sensible to our spiritual dangers as to turn to God in penitence, confession of sin, renunciation of it, and earnest prayers for forgiveness. The sense of theological terms, as used in the New Testament, must not be rigidly interpreted by Greek etymologies, which, while they amuse, will sometimes mislead.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand.—This phrase, and that of "the kingdom of God," signify the same thing. Similar expressions, to be found in Jewish writers, who often use them to express the true worship and fear of God, have been referred to in illustration; but Jews are poor commentators upon this phrase, because they never attained to true notions of the kingdom of Messiah. The kingdom here referred to is that which Daniel and other prophets so explicitly predicted, and the creation of which our Lord, by the public ministry on which he was now entering, was about to commence. It is therefore said by the Baptist to be "at hand." The very connection of REPENTANCE with this kingdom, as a necessary preparation for men becoming subjects of it, strongly marks its spiritual character. That is, it was not to be a kingdom "of this world;" not to originate in human policy, or to be concerned with merely civil matters. It was not to exhibit a monarch arrayed in external pomp, claiming some particular territory as his dominions, and defending them by arms against invasions; or exercising the office of "a judge and divider" of property, which our Lord expressly on one occasion refused to become, even when solicited. His was the more glorious office of bringing the hearts of men into subjection to the authority of God by moral influence, so that they should make his laws the rule of their private conduct, and the principles of his religion, its justice, mercy, and truth, the basis of all their social and political institutions. This was done by a perfect declaration of the claims of God, and the duties of men; by the work of his Spirit in their hearts, producing repentance for sin, and aversion to it; by reconciling them to God by faith in his sacrifice; by placing the heart under the constant and regenerating influence of grace, and by kindling there the flame of supreme love to God, to render the service and subjection of men to God voluntary and grateful, universal and absolute. This is the kingdom of God which an apostle so forcibly describes to be "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It has no parallel; for the establishment of such a sovereignty as this could never enter into the heart of man to conceive; its design and execution equally implied Divine wisdom and Divine power; it is confined to no people, no country, no rank; it addresses itself to no collective bodies, but separately to individuals; and it is only through the multiplication of those individuals themselves, who are brought thus into a state of subjection, that it affects the state and condition of external political society, by the diffusion of the corrective principles of truth, justice, and charity. But in this way it urges forward, and will finally accomplish, those mighty and beneficial changes in the social and political condition of all nations, on which the prophets so rapturously dwell, as the final results of Messiah's glorious and universal reign. Of this kingdom, so purely spiritual, but which was expressed by the prophets in terms taken from the accidents of earthly monarchies, the Jews could have no just conception, because they interpreted those predictions literally, and in a manner most accordant with their carnal desires and expectations, their national pride, and their haughty ambition. With these notions even the disciples of our Lord himself were so infected, that, though the whole current of his teaching, and the most striking parts of his conduct, tended to correct the error, they were "slow of heart to understand," and never fully attained to true conceptions of the great subject, until after Christ's resurrection and ascension to sit, not upon an earthly throne, but upon a heavenly one, as suited to that heavenly kingdom which he was first to establish among men on earth, and to perfect for ever amid the glories of immortality.

of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.

Verse 3. *For this is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voice, &c.*—These words are supposed by some to have been first spoken of the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, through the desert places which separated the two countries. Bishop Lowth takes this view, but allows that under the emblem of that deliverance a redemption of an infinitely more glorious nature was shadowed out, and that the evangelists, with the greatest propriety, apply the words to the opening of the Gospel dispensation by John the Baptist. But there is no more reason to suppose that this lofty prediction had a primary and an ultimate sense, than that the fifty-third chapter of the same prophet referred first to some person who lived before Christ, and then more perfectly to Christ himself. Many prophecies, indeed, have a double reference, an immediate and an ultimate one, which arose out of that system of typical persons and typical things which we find in Scripture. But it is equally certain that many prophecies of the Old Testament refer to Christ, and to him only. Such, by the acknowledgment of all Christians, is the fifty-third of Isaiah; and whoever reads the section in which the passage in question stands, and which obviously comprehends the first eleven verses of the fortieth chapter of the same book, will perceive that it is as distinct and perfect a portion of prophecy, and possesses as complete a unity as the former, and has no internal marks of reference whatever to any other event beside that personal appearance of Messiah, to be introduced by his harbinger. Bishop Lowth opens the passage with his usual taste: "The prophet hears a voice giving orders by solemn proclamation, to prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness, to remove all obstructions before Jehovah marching through the desert; the idea being taken from the practice of eastern monarchs, who sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open the passes, to level the ways, and to remove impediments." But what application there is in all this to the return of the Jews from Babylon, it is impossible to conceive. Had they marched from Babylon, as from Egypt, with the visible cloud of the Divine presence among them there would then have been an adaptation in the terms of the prophecy to the event; "Jehovah" would then have had "his way in the wilderness;" but they returned in scattered parties, without pomp, and especially without any visible presence of the Lord. Isaiah, however, expressly says that the voice cries, "Prepare the way of the Lord;" and the passage which St. Matthew quotes with brevity, declares that "the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and that all flesh should see it." It is clear, therefore, that it has no application to the return of the Jews, and refers solely to those events to which the evangelists so explicitly apply it. John the Baptist was "THE VOICE" or herald, and Jesus was the JEHOVAH whose personal appearance as "God manifest in the flesh," and subsequent glorious manifestation, he proclaimed and prepared.

This mission of John, as the harbinger of our Lord, exhibits another instance of the fulfilment of those prophecies to which St. Matthew, as writing first especially to the Jews, directed their attention more frequently than the other evangelists. At the same time the accomplishment of a prophecy which borrows its terms from the magnificence of eastern monarchs, who were preceded by heralds, and before whom valleys were exalted and hills levelled, in a manner so manifestly spiritual, and turns the attention so absolutely from external to moral grandeur, sufficiently reproves those who contend too strenuously for the literal accomplishment of the sayings of the ancient prophets, and thereby often fall into a Jewish mode of interpreting them. Prophecy has its peculiar imagery, its own appropriate dress of metaphor and allegory, which must not be overlooked. Here, the monarch is Christ, but his majesty is in his doctrine, his character, and his works. The herald, too, is a man in rough raiment, issuing from the wild solitudes in which he had been trained to converse with God, to rouse a slumbering people by urging their immediate repentance upon pain of imminent judgments; and the levelling of hills and valleys is that preparation of the heart for the doctrine of Christ which consists in contrition and humility. That the Baptist was a powerful preacher, the immense number of persons who flocked to his baptism, confessing their sins, is a sufficient proof; that he was a successful one, in his special office of "preparing the way of the Lord," appears from this, that several of the apostles and others of the early disciples of Christ had been previously the disciples of John; and the effect of his preaching was, no doubt, not only to prepare them, but multitudes of the Jews, to receive the Gospel, both in Judea and in other places into which his disciples carried his doctrine; for of this the evangelical history contains many indications. There was also probably in this dispensation of John the Baptist something of a typical character. The way of Christ in all ages is "prepared" only by repentance;

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his

and wherever that is preached with power, and under right views of the Lamb of God, to which it is to point, as "taking away the sins of the world," the valleys are exalted, the mountains and hills are brought low, the crooked is made straight, and the rough places plain; and then comes the revelation of the Lord in pardoning mercy, and manifestation of Christ as "the salvation of God."

The ministry of the Baptist was of a kind peculiar to itself. As a prophet, he not only spoke of the immediate appearing of the Christ, but pointed him out to his disciples; and his baptism was in fact the token of initiation into a new dispensation intermediate between that of Moses and fully revealed Christianity. It was a declaration of repentance and renunciation of sin, and it was a profession of faith in the *immediate revelation* of the Messiah, and of trust in him to take away sin; for to him as the Redeemer John directed his converts. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." With baptisms or washings, as emblems of the putting away of sin, the Jews were familiar; and proselytes from Gentilism to the religion of the Jews were baptized as well as circumcised in token of the same thing, and the renunciation of their old religion. All the Jews therefore, who in truth, and with a right understanding of the case, submitted to John's baptism, so far renounced Judaism in its primitive form as a ground of hope as to wait for the remission of the sins they repented of and confessed no longer from their accustomed sacrifices, but immediately from the Messiah: "Behold," said John, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Lightfoot has showed from the rabbinical writings, that the Jews themselves have held, and still hold, that repentance should precede the coming of Messiah. The circumstance of our Lord's submission to John's baptism does not affect this view of its nature and design. That it was not necessary for Christ, as a sign of repentance, and passing into a new dispensation and better hopes of salvation, is clear from the objecting of John to administer the peculiar rite of his ministry to Christ until urged by his authority; and also from the ground on which our Lord puts his own act, which he makes not an act of repentance, but of fulfilling all "righteousness," that is, perfectly obeying the will of the Father in every appointment laid upon him; and finally, from the baptism of John as administered to Christ, rising into an entirely different and higher order from his ordinary one; for our Lord was then "baptized with the Holy Ghost," which it was no part of John's baptism to impart. All these circumstances prove that John was, in the case of our Lord, employed in a ministry quite distinct from his common one; and that the chief end of the baptism of Christ was to attest his Messiahship fully to John, by making him the witness of the sign which God had previously appointed. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

Verse 4. *Raiment of camel's hair, &c.*—John wore the same dress as Elijah, or, as it is written in the New Testament, Elias, in whose "spirit and power" he came, and whose name he figuratively bore. "He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite," 2 Kings i, 8. This garment was not of the fine hair of the camel, spun and woven, of which a soft cloth was made, called חמילה, from which our *camblet* is derived; but either the skin of the camel dressed with the hair, or a rough fabric manufactured from the coarser pile. This was worn by the prophets, not for purposes of bodily mortification, as some have dreamed; but yet in a spirit of self-denial.

Locusts and wild honey.—The latter, *μελι αγριον*, was produced by bees which collected in trunks of trees and in rocks, throughout Palestine; thus, Psalm lxxxi, 16, we read, "honey out of the stony rock." The former, *ακριδες*, has been made the subject of conjectural and emendatory criticism; but the real locust dried is used as food throughout the east, and some of the species were permitted to be eaten by the law, Leviticus xi, 22. The rabbins state that it was usual for the Jews to hunt after locusts for food.

Verse 6. *And were baptized.*—That is, as John himself explains it, "with water unto repentance." See note on verse 3.

In Jordan.—Water, for the baptism of such multitudes, could only be procured from the river, in a part of the country where springs and fountains were not found, or were private property. That the people were *immersed* with their clothes on, it would be absurd to suppose; that they were baptized naked, would be an indecent assumption; and that dresses should have been provided, is impossible. They, no doubt, went down to the water's edge, and then the element was *poured* upon them; for the expression, "baptized IN Jordan," means no more than within the banks of Jordan, that is, in the bed of the river, which had a double bank, because of its great overflow at certain seasons.

baptism, he said unto them, [c] O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

[c] Matt. xii, 34.

Confessing their sins.—Not unto John, but unto God; though, being powerfully affected by his awakening sermons, they probably did this audibly. Yet even this does not certainly appear; for the very nature of the rite of baptism, as practised by John, implied confession of sin, a pleading guilty to his reproofs, and a resolution to seek remission of sins from the Messiah who was immediately to succeed him. If there was more than this tacit acknowledgment of sin, it was probably like that mentioned in Ezra x, 1, where Ezra himself expressed the confession, and the congregation "wept very sore." A similar scene is described in Nehemiah ix. The immense multitudes which came to John would necessarily prevent a particular confession being made to him by each individual. Of these multitudes we may infer from singling out the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees for reproof, that a great proportion were sincerely penitent. So powerful was the ministry of this extraordinary messenger of God.

Verse 7. *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*—These sects being now for the first time mentioned, a short account of them is necessary. The most satisfactory derivation of the name of PHARISEES is from פרש, *to separate*, because they assumed to themselves a superior sanctity. Josephus' account of them is, that they valued themselves for their exactness in keeping, and their skill in interpreting, the law, and seemed to excel all others in the knowledge and observance of the customs of their fathers. If they sprung from the Assideans, חסדים, or, *the pious*, described in the Maccabees as, εκουσιαζ ομενοι τω νομω, "voluntarily devoted to the law," they had a good origin; and it is probable that the genuine and vigorous piety of the Jewish Church after the return from Babylon, was embodied in this sect, at least as far as respected the influential class of society. That they had generally degenerated into formality, superstition, and hypocrisy, though not without many individual exceptions, is evident both from the writings of the evangelists, and from contemporary history. On the doctrines of the resurrection from the dead, and the immateriality of the soul, they were more orthodox than the Sadducees; but they interpreted the prophecies respecting Messiah in a gross and worldly sense; placed religion in ceremonies; turned it into an instrument of gaining popular applause; made a show of their prayers and alms; affected not only to keep the law, but to go beyond the requirements of its ceremonial precepts, in their obedience;—paying tithe of "anise, mint, and cummin," practising more frequent ablutions than the law required, fasting twice a week, and in some instances submitting to painful austerities and mortifications; but with all this outward show of strictness, they neglected the purification of the heart and the practice of moral virtue. They were proud, arrogating to themselves the peculiar favour of Heaven, contemptuous of others, especially of the body of the people, from whom they exacted an abject reverence; and covetous, for, under pretence of sanctity, they made a prey of the ignorant and unwary. To colour all these evils, they had a delusive system of casuistry, and pleaded in justification traditions of the elders, to which they not only gave equal authority with the law of God, but often interpreted the law by them, contrary to its true meaning, so that, as they were charged by our Lord, they "made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions." Most of the Jews at present are rabbinists or Pharisees, that is, they believe in, and observe, the traditions; the remainder are Karaites, who only regard the law in its literal interpretation.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits [*] meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within your-

[*] Or, *answerable to amendment of life.*

The SADDUCEES were coeval with the Pharisees, and probably, like the present Karaites, originally owed their distinction to their rejecting traditions, and adhering to the text of the Pentateuch. The oriental and Greek philosophy, from the time of Alexander the Great, however, infected the learning among the Jews, and gave rise to multifarious speculations and theories. The Sadducees especially affected philosophy, openly professed the tenet of materialism, denied the resurrection of the body, and the existence of angels and men departed. To the law of Moses they, however, professed the strongest attachment, and were equally bigoted with the Pharisees, subjecting it, however theologically, to a philosophical interpretation. The men of rank and wealth, the court, and the nobles, were chiefly of this sect. Thus, although the Jews at the coming of our Lord were free from the charge of idolatry, which was their ancient easily besetting sin, they had generally fallen, as a people, into a state of awful declension from truth and piety, more deeply so probably in Judea than in the Greek cities, and in Jerusalem most of all. There was another Jewish sect, not mentioned in the gospels, the Essenes. These were abstemious and austere in their manners, given up to mystical speculations, and lived apart from cities, in communities of their own, and chiefly

selves, [d] We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

[d] St. John, chap. viii, 39.

in Egypt, and in the wilderness of Judea. None of these appear to have attended our Lord's ministry; but afterward many of them became Christians, and are supposed to have infected some of the early Churches with their doctrines of abstaining from meats, the worshipping of angels, &c.; and they sowed the seeds of many sects which, in various ways, adulterated Christianity.

Come to his baptism.—They wished to submit to this rite principally, no doubt, because it was administered by a prophet, who brought them tidings of the immediate revelation of Messiah; and they thus professed their faith in John's mission as the Messiah's harbinger, and as such hoped to recommend themselves to him. This seems to have been their motive: self-confident as they were, they would scarcely have submitted to a rite which implied some change of religious views; for they were familiar with the practice of baptism, which was administered by them to Gentiles and their families when they embraced the Jewish religion. But of John's baptism in its spiritual character, as baptism "unto REPENTANCE," and to FAITH in the coming of Messiah to take away or remit sin, they had no conception; for these self-righteous persons in their own opinion had no sins to confess, and therefore we do not read that they came like the others, "confessing their sins." To them, therefore, John appears to have refused the distinguishing rite of his dispensation, because of their misconceptions of it, and their want of repentance. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*, was his address to them. Show that you truly repent, by your humility, broken-heartedness, self-renunciation, and self-abhorrence, by your acknowledgment of sin, and your renunciation of it; and then come and be baptized. Some, indeed, contend that after this warning they were baptized: but this question appears to be set at rest by Luke vii, 27–30, where our Lord, having commended the character of John the Baptist, the evangelist adds, "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, *not being baptized of him.*" They were offended and went away, denying that mission of the Baptist which at first they appeared to acknowledge.

Generation of vipers, &c.—The offspring, or children of vipers, in opposition to their boast of being the children of Abraham,—men of subtle and malignant dispositions. The word εχιδνα is used in a metaphorical sense, closely analogous to this, by classic authors.

Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—Some take this as an expression of surprise. So Macknight: "Ye Pharisees form your righteousness on the works of the law; ye Sadducees deny the doctrine of a resurrection; how is it then that men of your principles come to a baptism of repentance?" It is, however, better understood as implying a negation,—no one hath warned you, no one effectually: you are not penitently apprehensive of the displeasure of God; but either, as Pharisees, trust in yourselves that you already possess the special favour of God, or, as Sadducees, reject the doctrine of future punishment entirely. The *wrath to come* is not to be understood of the destruction of Judea; for John dealt with his hearers as sinners before God, and liable as such to the penalty of sin in a future life. THIS was the wrath of which he speaks; and it is a tremendous doctrine which he thus teaches in one sentence: this wrath is always *wrath to come;* that is, it is not only a future penal visitation, but even when this visitation has arrived, it will still be "wrath to come" for ever! "Fools" only "can make a mock at sin" when these are its consequences.

Verse 9. *And think not to say within yourselves, &c.*—A common mode of expression, says Lightfoot, in the Talmud. Μη δοξητε λεγειν is equivalent to "*be not of opinion;*" *ne lubeat vobis*, "be not disposed to say;" let not this delusive opinion have a place in your thoughts. *We have Abraham to our father*, a relation which was the theme of their constant boastings, and from which they expected salvation, merely by virtue of their fleshly descent, though both the faith and the works of Abraham were wanting among them. There is no imputation of the holiness of pious ancestors to their children, and personal regeneration can alone qualify men for the kingdom of God. *For God is able of these stones, &c.* Perhaps John pointed to the rocks and stones in the bed of the Jordan. The meaning is, not that children to Abraham could be raised up from stones in the sense of natural descent and relationship, which was a thing impossible; but that as children to Abraham were at first raised up by a miracle in the birth of Isaac, so though God should destroy the then race of Jews, no purpose of his would fall to the ground; because he was able to raise up a people from the stones, to stand in the place of the natural descendants of Abraham, were that necessary to accomplish the purposes of his providence and grace. That there was also a tacit reference to the calling of the Gentiles is very probable.—They were despised by the Jews as though

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: [e] therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

[e] St. Matthew, chap. vii, 19.

they had been the stones under their feet; and were as little likely to become the true Church of God in the world as stones were to become living men. Yet God by his almighty grace not only gave them spiritual life, and adopted them as Abraham's believing seed; but formed them into his Church, to the exclusion of the unbelieving Jews, and made them his peculiar people. So Irenæus: "Jesus raised up children to Abraham from the stones, when he turned us from the religion of stones, (*a lapidum religione*, meaning the worship of gods of stone, &c.,) and from our own insensible and barren state of mind, and brought us to a faith like that of Abraham's." Jerome takes a similar view of the import of the passage.

Verse 10. *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.*—Fruitless and fruitful trees have in all ages been used as metaphors to express good and bad men; and as barren trees, after patient forbearance, are finally cut down and burned, so the certainty and terribleness of the punishment of the wicked are forcibly indicated by the metaphor. The same image is employed by Isaiah with great effect to express the judgments which should fall upon all the ranks of a guilty nation, by the Chaldean invasion: "Behold, the Lord of hosts shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one," x, 33, 34. The Baptist does not, however, refer to the Jewish state, but to the dangerous condition of sinful individuals. (See note on verse 8.) The axe being laid "to the root," that is, *at* or *near to*, the root, intimates both the long suffering of God which gave them space for repentance; and the certainty that, if the tree remained unfruitful, it would be "hewn down and cast into the fire."—Mercy grants delay, but justice lays down the axe in preparation for the work of excision. The danger, too, was not distant, but imminent; *ηδη δε και, and even now the axe is laid at the root, &c.*

Verse 11. *I indeed baptize you with water.*—That is, with water only; for the Spirit was to be administered by Christ alone. "*Unto repentance*, *εις μετανοιαν*," UPON *repentance*, as Grotius well suggests; that being the condition of his baptism. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.* The Jewish shoes were a kind of sandal, fastened to the foot with thongs, easily untied and slipped off, and were laid aside for washing the feet on entering a house, or before meals. The word here used is indeed not *σανδαλιον*, but *υποδημα*; but the Septuagint renders נעל sometimes by one and sometimes by the other. The unloosing of the sandals, and carrying them away till wanted, was a menial office of the lowest kind, both among Greeks and Jews. Hence among the latter the disciples of the rabbins were obliged to perform every kind of office for them, the unloosing and carrying of the sandals excepted. Thus Maimonides: "All services which a servant does for his master, a disciple does for his teacher, except unloosing his shoes." No words could therefore more forcibly express the sense that John had of the superiority of Christ. In his view, he was the supreme Lord, and himself a servant so low in comparison of this "*mightier*" Being, that he was not even worthy to unloose and bear his sandals. The whole manner in which the Baptist speaks of Christ in comparison with himself is utterly irreconcilable with his regarding him merely as an exalted human being. "*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*," *εν Πνευματι αγιω και πυρι*. Unless this be rendered, "He shall baptize you IN the Holy Ghost and fire," it is a folly for the advocates of immersion to translate *εν υδατι*, "IN water." They have indeed ventured on both, in support of a favourite opinion; but in what sense—whatever allowance may be made for figurative language—men can be said to be *plunged* OR *immersed* "in the Holy Ghost and fire," it is impossible to conceive. *Εν τω Ιορδανη* may indeed be translated "in Jordan," for the reason before given; but the preposition may be taken in the sense of WITH, understanding an ellipsis, "with *the water* of the Jordan." But there the *place* of baptism only is referred to, here the *mode* and *kind* of baptism; and as the manner in which the baptism of the Holy Ghost was actually administered by Christ is recorded, we have the sense of the preposition fixed by the fact. Thus when this baptism took place we read, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of *fire*, and it SAT UPON each of them; and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST." Thus the baptism of "the Holy Ghost and fire," was a descent UPON, and not an immersion INTO; and John must be understood to use the word baptism when he refers to water, in the sense of pouring or effusion.

It is a strange opinion entertained by some commentators, that the fiery baptism here spoken of signifies the calamities which afterward befell the impenitent Jews. The fancies of some of the fathers on this text were also numerous, but not worth recording. Those of them who referred it to the descent of the Holy Spirit at the day of pentecost in

11 [f] I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:
12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he

[f] Mark i, 8; Luke iii, 16; John i, 26.

his plenitude of gifts and graces, interpret correctly. The Holy Ghost, and fire, mean the same thing, the latter clause being exegetical; (*Spiritus, qui est ignis*, Elsner;) and the words added were designed to convey the lofty notion of an illuminating, purifying, and most energetic effusion of the Holy Spirit. And it is to be observed that whenever our Lord speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit, in that fulness of influence which was to be administered to all that believed on him, he speaks of it as a *future* gift, "which they that believed on him should receive;" and the direction to the disciples was, that they should "tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high." The declaration in the text was first fulfilled at the day of pentecost; but not only then: it is fulfilled whenever the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed to believers; for when St. Peter gives an account of the result of his mission to Cornelius, he says, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning: then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," Acts xi, 15, 16. With this inspired comment before them, how remarkable is it that the professed interpreters of Scripture should have had any difference of opinion as to the meaning of the words of the Baptist! The external emblem of fire accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit at the day of pentecost, probably to mark more sensibly the accomplishment of this predictive promise; but at other times, even when followed by miraculous gifts, this circumstance was wanting, as in the instance of the house of Cornelius above referred to. We are thus taught that when the gift of the Spirit is invisible and secret, it is yet the mighty and transforming BAPTISM OF FIRE; that is, his influences are fitly represented by that powerful and purging element. This is one of the particulars in which the superiority of Christ's baptism consisted. John's baptism was founded upon a confession of sin; and that of Christ was the application of a Divine energy to purge it away; as fire removes those stains and pollutions which water cannot. The words, "and fire," are wanting in some MSS.; but that they are genuine, is sufficiently proved from their being in the parallel passages in St. Luke, and in the older MSS. and versions. The Socinian writers urge the absence of the article before Πνευματι αγιω against the words being understood of the Holy Spirit; and Bishop Middleton's distinction between the Holy Spirit taken *personally*, and his *influence*, in order to account for this absence of the article, is worth nothing. The reasons for the omissions and insertions of the Greek article in many instances, after all the investigation which the subject has of late years received, are far from being satisfactorily made out. The foundation which different theories assume is often too frail to bear the weight of an argument: and of this, the passage before us is a pregnant proof. We may urge against Wakefield's translations, "with a holy spirit of fire," and "with a holy wind, and with a fire," their unintelligible absurdity; for no idea, surely, can be attached to baptism with a holy spirit of fire, or to baptism with wind, much less to a holy wind; and especially when this same critic will not allow that even "a personified operation of Deity" is to be understood without the article. To this may be added the remark of Campbell, whose views of the passage are otherwise obscure and defective, that no example can be produced of the adjective, *holy*, being joined to πνευμα, where the meaning of πνευμα is *wind*. But there is a more decisive answer in Acts xi, 15, 16; where it is plain that the absence or presence of the article before πνευμα makes not the least difference in the sense of the term; and that it is both inserted and omitted in the same breath. Εν δε τω αρξασθαι με λαλειν, επεπεσε ΤΟ Πνευμα ΤΟ αγιον επ' αυτους, ωσπερ και εφ ημας εν αρχη. Εμνησθην δε του ρηματος Κυριου ως ελεγεν. Ιωανης μεν εβαπτισεν υδατι, υμεις δε βαπτισθησεσθε εν Πνευματι αγιω. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as at the beginning: then remembered," &c. Here it is clear that the absence of the article in the words of John, which he quotes, occasioned St. Peter no difficulty; but that he applied πνευμα in its anarthrous form to the personal operations of the Divine Spirit of God himself.

Verse 12. *Whose fan is in his hand, &c.*—The metaphors in this verse are taken from the process of threshing among the Jews. The sheaves of corn were trodden by oxen upon a "*threshing floor*," or prepared plain area, formed upon some elevated place, so as to force out the grain; then the winnowing fan, which was often a portable instrument used by the hand, and here not inaptly rendered by some, "a winnowing shovel," was applied to throw up the grain to the wind, that the *chaff* might be separated from it; while the *straw*, being crushed beneath the feet of the oxen and rendered worthless, was reserved with the separated chaff to be burned with other fuel in heating their ovens. The

will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

13 ¶ ε Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

ε Mark i, 9; Luke iii, 21.

word *αχυρον* equally includes the chaff and the crushed and worthless straw. The phrase *πυρι ασβεστω, with unquenchable fire*, is awfully emphatic. The domestic fires in which the straw was burned as fuel were extinguishable, and often extinguished; but this is "unquenchable," a clear indication of the perpetuity of future punishment. Those who refer all this to the destruction of Jerusalem do not rightly apprehend the nature of John's ministry. His office was to warn men of their eternal danger as sinners, and to pluck them, if possible, out of the fire of Divine wrath. There is not an expression in the whole of this discourse of his which leads to the supposition, that he intended merely or chiefly to warn his hearers against temporal judgments. Its awakening character was manifestly framed upon views of deeper and more formidable dangers than the Roman invasion, before which, most of his hearers, he knew, would be in an eternal world. And as he had preached Christ in his offices of grace, and as baptizing those who should believe on him with the Holy Ghost, so here he proclaims him in his office of Judge, separating the chaff and straw from the grain, the wicked from the righteous, the office which he now exercises in the invisible world, upon all departed spirits, between whom he will make a still more public separation, with visible majesty, at the judgment of the great day. The instrument by which corn was winnowed was employed by heathen writers with a similar metaphorical application; and in the Eleusinian mysteries a mystic FAN is said to have been employed as a symbol, to denote the separation of the initiated, or holy, from the profane.

Verse 13. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John.*—Τοτε, *then*, does not always so accurately mark the time, as to lead to the conclusion, that our Lord in this instance came to John at that particular juncture when he was addressing the multitudes in the discourse contained in the preceding verses. The notion of those, therefore, who think that the august scene of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him was a public one has no solid foundation. The contrary, indeed, appears to be indicated by this circumstance, that the descent of the Spirit was promised to be a sign to John the Baptist himself, John i, 33, to point out that personage whose precursor he was commissioned to be. It is not probable that this solemn token was given in the midst of a multitude; and in the presence of the scoffing Pharisees and Sadducees. The whole had too sacred and too mystic a character for indiscriminate gaze; and as no reference occurs to this event in the gospels, as a public one, we may conclude that none but the Baptist and Christ were present. The adverb of time with which the account is introduced means no more than at the period when John was baptizing on the Jordan; near to which river he appears for some time to have fixed his abode; but he undoubtedly had some seasons of relaxation and of privacy.

Verse 14. *But John forbade him, &c.*—John declares that "he knew him not" till his baptism; the reason being, that, though the families were related, yet John had lived long in solitude, at a great distance from the residence of Christ; Divine Providence having ordered this circumstance that it might be manifest that there was no concert between them. Now, for the first time since the days of their infancy, John became acquainted with Christ; and his recognition of him was no doubt produced by supernatural impulse; and knowing then in whose presence he was, said, in acknowledgment of his dignity, "I have need to be baptized of thee." Then, in the baptism which took place immediately after, he received the confirmatory sign which demonstrated him to be the Messiah.

Verse 15. *To fulfil all righteousness.*—See note on verse 3. To the remarks there, may be added, that our Lord says, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," using the plural; by which form of speaking he urged John to his duty. Christ, who never sinned, was not under obligation to submit to John's baptism as a baptism upon repentance, nor was he received by John under that condition; for John's reluctance to baptize Christ was an explicit declaration that he "needed no repentance." But he was baptized by him, as stated in the note referred to, on the simple ground of "fulfilling all righteousness," which is to be understood of obedience to every appointment of his Father, the reasons of which, notwithstanding many have been given, as that it was to honour John's ministry, &c., are not clearly revealed; so that it becomes us to confess our ignorance. It was sufficient for our Lord that such was

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

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the Divine will that he should be baptized of John, and that John, though overwhelmed with a just sense of his inferiority, should baptize him; and it was "the righteousness" of both to obey. Some light is, however, thrown upon this act by the phrase rendered, "*it becometh* us to fulfil," &c., *πρεπον εστιν ημιν*, intimating *fitness* and *propriety*, rather than that *obligation* under which all the Jews were placed to submit to the baptism of John. This "fitness" appears to have arisen out of the mutual testimony that John and Jesus were to give to each other's mission; and thus a connection was established between the forerunner and him whose herald he was; so that the person to whom John gave testimony as Messiah could not be mistaken. The notion that Christ was baptized with reference to the entrance of the Levitical priests into their office by anointing and baptism, does not seem to be well founded, since their baptism was a mere ablution, which was constantly repeated during their ministry.

Verse 16. *Went up straightway out of the water, &c.*—That it should be stated that he went up straightway out of, or rather FROM the water, has its reason, or otherwise it would be a trifling remark; for why should he remain in the water after he had been baptized? It is manifest that the descent of the Holy Spirit did not take place during the administration of the rite to him, which is a clear proof that it was a distinct act of God, wholly unconnected with the baptism of John; so that this baptism was not a means of communicating this grace; for John baptized not with the Holy Ghost; and it was no doubt to mark this circumstance, that his departing from the water, that is, ascending the bank of the Jordan, IMMEDIATELY after his baptism, is noticed. Campbell renders it, "Jesus, being baptized, no sooner arose out of the water than heaven was opened," &c., which is a very forced translation of *ανεβη ευθυς απο του υδατος*. The common version is to be every way preferred; or, if any alteration were thought necessary, "and scarcely had he ascended from the water," as suggested by several critics, would be preferable. The adverb has been variously arranged in the sentence by others; but none of them appear to have caught the intention of the evangelist, which evidently was, to mark distinctly the difference of time between the ASCENT from the river and the DESCENT of the Spirit, so as to guard against the idea, that the baptism of John was an ordinance through which the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon Christ was dispensed.

The heavens were opened, &c.—When a meteor, or any extraordinary appearance, falling from the clouds or from the higher regions of the atmosphere, occurred, the Jews usually expressed it by the phrase, "the heavens were opened." *Unto him*, some think to Christ, in the sense of *for his sake*; but more probably the sense is, they were opened unto John; for his conviction the sign was made a visible and splendid one, because he was to be the witness of those things, and to give his public testimony to them.

Descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.—Tertullian and St. Augustine entertained the notion that a real dove was employed as the visible sign on this occasion. It does not, however, clearly appear that the likeness of a dove was apparent. St. Luke says, "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him;" but the bodily shape, *σωματικω ειδει*, may mean no more than a defined, visible appearance; and the comparison may be between the motion of this appearance in its descent, and the motion of a dove when alighting. But, whether this view be taken, or, which is at least equally probable, that the effulgence which broke from the heavens, had the similitude of a dove, the conclusion is the same; for, whether by the shape or the peculiarity of the motion, the idea of a dove was strongly and INTENTIONALLY excited in the mind of John; the reason of which is justly and beautifully conceived by Archbishop Leighton: "The Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in the shape of fire; there was something to be purged in them; but on Christ as a dove, because there was no need of cleansing or purging any thing. That, therefore, was a symbol of the spotless purity of his nature."

Verse 17. *And lo a voice from heaven, &c.*—Some absurdly render *φωνη*, *thunder*, as though thunder ever uttered articulate sounds. It was *a voice* uttering the words which follow, the voice of the eternal Father, accrediting to his high office his eternal Son, now incarnate: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Here the articles are most emphatic, *Ουτος εστιν ο υιος μου ο αγαπητος*, *This is that Son of mine, that beloved Son, εν ω ευδοκησα, in whom I am well pleased.* The aorist, too, is here emphatic also, and is used, after the manner of Greek writers, as including the past, present, and future time; *that beloved Son, in whom I have been, am, and shall be well pleased*; or, in brief, *in whom I am* ALWAYS *well pleased.* Here is the strongest testimony from the

highest and most glorious authority. This voice of God repeated on this occasion what it had before solemnly proclaimed by the spirit of prophecy: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; MY BELOVED, in whom I am well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him." This was Christ's solemn inauguration into his prophetic office.

CHAPTER IV.

1 Christ fasteth, and is tempted. 11 The angels minister unto him, 13 He dwelleth in Capernaum, 17 beginneth to preach, 18 calleth Peter, and Andrew, 21 James and John, 23 and healeth all the diseased.

1 Then was [a] Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward a hungered.

a Mark i, 12; Luke iv, 1.

CHAPTER IV. Verse 1. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.*—Τοτε appears here to have the sense of *afterward*; for in John i, 35, 48; ii, 1, there is an account of the transactions of three days immediately following the baptism of Christ; on one of which he attended the marriage in Cana of Galilee. On the completion of these he *was led* UP *of the Spirit*, that is, he was led up from the plain to the mountainous parts of the desert. This mode of speaking plainly shows that the transaction was not in vision. He was impelled by a strong influence of the Spirit, from one place to another. Any place would have been equally suitable for the purpose of producing an impression upon the imagination during sleep, or in a trance; but here a solitary, wild, and secluded region is chosen, that during his forty days' trial he should be subject to no intrusion, and that he might have no relief from food at that distance from the habitations of men. The Spirit here mentioned is the Holy Spirit, which had just descended upon him; and as that Spirit exerted an extraordinary power upon the animal frame of some of the prophets, impelling them to various places, and signally sustaining them under great exertions and fasts, so this was a sensible proof that the same mighty prophetic Spirit, though in him "without measure," had been received by him.—St. Mark uses the strong phrase, το Πνευμα αυτον εκβαλλει, "the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." The place is generally supposed to be the wilderness of Judea, a sterile, rocky, and desolate region, "of savage aspect," says Maundrell; and which a more modern traveller describes as having "the rudest appearance; not a blade of verdure is to be seen over all the surface, and not the sound of a living creature is to be heard over all the extent." It is, however, debated whether this wilderness, which ran southward along the Dead Sea, or some part of the mountainous region near the lake of Tiberias, and which in many places is equally wild and solitary, was the scene of the temptation. A third opinion places the transaction in the desert of *Quarantonia*, which extends from Jericho, by the mountain of Bethel, two miles and a half from Jerusalem, which also was desert and uncultivated. This is maintained by Wetstein, Rosenmuller, and Koinoel. It had its modern name from the *forty days* during which the temptation continued.

To be tempted of the devil.—The word answers to the Hebrew *Satan*, "an adversary." Wickliffe, in his translation, has rendered it *the feende*, a word derived from the German *feind*, which also signifies *an enemy*. This temptation was part of our Lord's humiliation. His holy soul was to be subject, through this long period of forty days and forty nights, to the foul suggestions of evil; it was also appointed that he should be made, in this respect, as in all others, like unto his brethren, "for that he himself both suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;" of which ability his victory is the indubitable proof. By this, too, he was to show forth his power over Satan, by whose guile the first Adam had been seduced; and to begin to justify his title to be that seed of the woman, whose office it was to bruise the serpent's head. Our modern rationalists, as they would be esteemed, but who have a much better title to be considered as the Sadducees of the Christian Church, deny the existence of the devil, and resolve therefore the whole of this account of our Lord's conflict partly into vision and partly into personification. It may, however, be affirmed that on philosophic grounds the existence of such malignant spirits as are employed in the work of tempting men involves no absurdity, and accords with analogies among men which cannot be denied, because they are obvious facts. If man, a rational being, is often seen to hate all good, and delighting only in evil, superior intelligences

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

may possess the same characters. If we see in many men a maturity of vice which expels all the better feelings, and an anxiety in such depraved persons to corrupt others, and to glory in the miseries they thus inflict, what have we in these cases but visible portraits of what Satan himself is, and exemplifications of the work in which he is employed? And, finally, if it enters into our state of probation to be tempted to evil; that such temptations should not arise as well from the influence of evil spirits as from the effect produced upon the imaginations, passions, and appetites by visible external things, no good reason can be given. There is nothing in this case which is contrary to any principle clearly laid down in the word of God, who maintains our free agency, in these circumstances of our state of trial, by the succours of his grace. On the other hand, the denial of the doctrine of temptation from the influence of invisible beings upon the soul of man must force us either to reject the Scriptures altogether, or to adopt those modes of violent interpretation which are wholly inconsistent with the simplicity of their historical narratives, and which would render their meaning in all cases so uncertain as to destroy their character as a revelation of truth from God. Nor less objectionable is the principle advocated by the neological critics of Germany, and applied to this and other cases, namely, that our Lord and his apostles often adopted the erroneous theological opinions and modes of speaking current among the Jews, just as they employed the philosophic language and allusions of the age in which they lived, without intending to give their sanction to any system of human science. For it remains to be proved, that either our Lord or his apostles in any case do ever speak according to an erroneous philosophy of the day; and, if they do, it is only allusively in cases where the current notions of the day would serve the moral purpose they intended just as well as the more correct mode of speaking now used, if, indeed, we are nearer to philosophic truth on such subjects than the ancients. But an error in what may be called pneumatological divinity stands on a very different ground. If there be no Satan, there is no Holy Ghost; for each may be resolved into personification: if there be no spiritual evil influence, we have no reason to conclude from the same Scriptures that there is any supernatural good influence. Farther: if there were no true demoniacal possessions, then were the persons reputed to be so possessed mere lunatics and epileptics; and the casting them out was a deceptive assumption of pretended power, fatal to the character of our Lord, and the honesty of his disciples; and if there be no disembodied spirits, then were the disciples deceived, and that by our Lord himself; and the hope of conscious existence immediately after the death of the body, so cheering to them and to all good men since, is without any foundation in truth. Finally, not to push these consequences any farther, it follows, in direct opposition to our Saviour's own words, that, although Jehovah is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he is the God of the DEAD, and not of the LIVING. All these consequences may, indeed, be hazarded by bold men, who treat the Scriptures with little deference; but their crime is not lessened by their temerity; for they profanely represent the inspired writers as teaching popularly what is not true, on some of the most serious subjects which can influence human feelings and human conduct. They change, too, the whole economy of Christianity, which presents us with a grand view of the connection of man, and the events and history of our world, with invisible worlds and beings, and thus isolate our earth as the theatre on which these great displays of the wisdom, power, and mercy of God take place, from those innumerable other beings which take an interest in them, and for whose instruction and advantage, or discomfiture and punishment, they are also permitted. A large portion of the grandeur of the great scheme of human redemption is thus at once annihilated by these petty and minifying systems. As to the notion that the temptation of our Lord was transacted in vision, it is contradicted by the simple narrative form which is used by the evangelists. It is in the same style that they record this event, and those which the objectors themselves acknowledge to be real: and with quite as much reason might the history of the crucifixion be resolved into the phantasms of a dream as the account before us. Thus viewed, too, the temptation could no longer be one of the circumstances of our Lord's humiliation; and the great moral use which St. Paul draws from it, as affording an assurance to the followers of Christ, that in all temptations they might rely upon his sympathy as having been "in all points tempted like unto us, yet without sin," is lost; seeing that we are tempted to evil, not in vision, but in reality. Finally: it is sufficient to settle this whole question entirely, to remark that if the temptation of our Lord were a dream or visionary representation, the usual exercise of the reason and the senses being suspended, it was *no temptation at all;* for there could have been no sin, if in a dream or a vision, in which all free agency would be suspended, our Lord

4 But he answered and said, It is written, [b] Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

[b] Deuteronomy, chap. viii, 3.

had either commanded the stones to be made bread, or had cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, or had even done homage to Satan himself.

Verse 2. *Fasted forty days and forty nights.*—Thus Moses and Elijah fasted, being like our Lord sustained by "the Preserver of men." The *nights* are mentioned as well as the days, because the Jews used to eat in the night during their common fasts; and, indeed, according to Maimonides, they might eat and drink after sunset during all the fasts, except the month of Abib. Throughout the whole of this period, however, our Saviour felt no hunger; for it is added, "AFTERWARD he hungered."

Verse 3. *And when the tempter came to him.*—This probably was the first visible appearance of Satan during the temptation; though, as it was the sole object of our Lord's being led up into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, we must conclude that a series of temptations, arising from that secret, invisible influence which the tempter was permitted to exercise upon his thoughts, had troubled his spirit through the whole of that painful season; and so, indeed, it is stated by the other evangelists. Now, however, Satan appears in a human form, as it would seem, for no other is intimated. It has been asked whether it is likely that Satan knew the dignity of our Lord's person; and if so, what hope of success could he have in tempting him? The question is more curious than useful; and perhaps is not capable of an answer entirely satisfactory. We may, however, remark that Satan could not be ignorant that the Messiah was promised and expected, nor of the high and Divine character assigned to him in the writings of the Jewish prophets; and as perhaps he was a better interpreter of Scripture than the Jews, he would not be thrown into any doubts as to the Messiahship of Jesus by the humility of his advent, and his then apparent indigent circumstances. But of the mystery of the personal union of the Divine and human natures in Christ he could have no adequate conception; for this is one of those respects in which "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Being therefore in necessary ignorance of the mode and degree in which the human nature of our Lord was sustained by the Divine, he could not ascertain how far our Lord AS A MAN was capable of sinning. He might therefore hope to prevail against the inferior nature, and, by defiling that, to render, at least, that incarnation of a Redeemer void.

And said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.—The temptation here is suitable to the circumstances: evil and good each derive force from their seasonableness; a point which a tempter so long practised and subtle as Satan well understands; and hence, our Lord being oppressed with hunger, he suggests to him to command the stones near them to be made bread, to answer the double purpose of supplying his own wants, and giving to a pretended inquirer as to the truth of his mission, which was the character he appears to have assumed, a miraculous proof of his dignity and office.—Satan evidently alludes to the baptism of Christ, in which he had been declared to be the Son of God. This very allusion shows that the absence of the article before *υιος* does not lower its sense. This is true also where the article is wanting both before *υιος* and *θεου*, as is proved by Matt. xxvii, 43.

Verse 4. *But he answered and said, It is written, &c.*—Our Lord puts honour upon the written word of God, by making use of it in repelling every temptation. He in whom were treasured up the riches of wisdom and knowledge, could have given such answers as had not previously been "written;" but he thus teaches us the sufficiency of God's revelations for every condition of man; and that we are to rely upon the wisdom of God as revealed in his word, with which we ought to have our memory richly furnished, rather than upon our own. Another important lesson is, that whatever is settled by the word of God admits of no appeal; and therefore, that we are not to dispute, but promptly, and without hesitation, to act upon it. He who lives in this habit soonest escapes from the entanglements of temptation. "He keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Our Lord's quotation is from Deut. viii, 3. "God suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." The Israelites, when they hungered, were not sustained by bread, but by manna, a new substance created and "rained from heaven" by "the word" of the Lord. It is that WORD which gives efficacy to the ordinary food of man; or it can provide him with new and extraordinary means of subsistence; or it can sustain him by its own almighty power, without the intervention of means at all, as it had done Christ, and Moses, and Elijah, in their fasts. It is therefore never necessary to do wrong in order to supply our wants. Our only concern is to please God, who has a thousand means of relieving the wants of those who need his interposition, and put their trust in him. But what evil would there have been in our Lord

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, [c] He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, [d] Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

[c] Psalm xci, 11.

[d] Deut. vi, 16.

commanding the stones to be made bread? The answer is, that it would have betrayed impatience under the suffering of hunger, which he was to sustain until God sent him supplies, which was therefore done at the best time by the ministry of angels. Our Lord would not shorten the assigned duration of his trial by taking his cause out of the hands of God. Beside this, our Lord knew who the tempter was, though under the guise of a man inquiring after the truth; and thus taught us that we are not to do the devil's bidding to relieve ourselves from inconvenience or calamity. Even had the pretended inquirer been a real man, it is not allowed to man to prescribe on what signs or evidences he will consent to admit a message or revelation from God. Yet how many ask for different or stronger evidences of the truth of Christianity, or its separate doctrines? Let such persons stand reproved by this history. "It is an evil and adulterous generation which seeketh after a sign;" such signs as they think fitting, and neglect those with which Divine wisdom has been pleased to stamp his own authority upon his own truth.

Verse 5. *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, &c.*—The holy city was the name by which Jerusalem was always called by the Jews; and the inscription on their shekel was, "Jerusalem the holy." That our Lord was taken up by Satan, and transported through the air, as the Holy Spirit carried away Philip to Azotus, Acts viii, 39, is a mere conjecture; nor is it indicated in the word used, which signifies *to take along with one* as a companion is taken. And if Satan appeared, as is likely, in the form of a man, personating, as stated above, an inquirer after truth, it is not probable that he would, by such an act of supernatural power, reveal at once his real character. This was reserved to the last temptation, when other means had failed. We may conclude, therefore, that he proposed it to our Lord to accompany him to Jerusalem, and that he yielded, as well knowing his character and purpose, yet meekly submitting to the whole process of the trial appointed by God.

And setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.—Grotius takes πτερυγιον to have been a battlement on the temple; but the courts, and all the buildings connected with the temple, may be included, and the battlement of the royal portico, built by Herod, which was at the outer court, was probably the place; especially as this was raised upon the verge of a precipice so deep, that, according to Josephus, it made persons dizzy to look down from it. To the roof of this portico there was easy access; and it was a proper place for the temptation with which our Lord was assaulted.

Verse 6. *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, &c.*—Here the Scripture is quoted by the tempter in aid of his design; and as the object of this suggestion was to lead to an unauthorized presumption upon special Divine interposition, it represents a numerous class of temptations, by which many have been misled to put themselves into circumstances of moral danger, without a Divine warrant. The promises of Scripture are also often perverted by such persons to support their vain confidence, who consider not the persons and their circumstances to whom they are spoken. The quotation used by Satan is from Psalm xci, 12, and was employed by him either because the Jews applied it prophetically to the Messiah, or because it expresses God's special care of good men, and so suited his purpose; for the argument was, If God takes charge of good men generally, how much more of "the Son of God" himself! "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," and let thy safety be the proof that thou art so. It is an observation of weight made by Jerome and others, that the tempter makes a mutilated citation of the passage, and leaves out a material circumstance: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, *to keep thee in all thy ways*;" that is, in all thy lawful courses of conduct, of which to cast himself down from a precipice was not one. Thus our Lord was first tempted to distrust God's care, and then to presume without warrant upon it.

Verse 7. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*—It has been disputed among critics whether to tempt God in this passage signifies to presume upon his goodness, or to distrust it. The word tempt, when applied to God, as it signifies to make trial of him, has always a bad sense, and in general seems to mean to seek from God displays of his power on occasions and in a way prescribed by ourselves. Now this may proceed either from distrust or presumption; and so the opinions alluded to may be somewhat reconciled.—The passage referred to is, "Ye shall not

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get

tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah," Deut. vi, 16. Now, although on that occasion, so provoking to God, when the Israelites wanted water, they are said to have tempted the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" it does not appear that this language proceeded so much from distrust, as from a petulant demand for an exertion of the Divine power at the time and in the manner they dared to prescribe. And though in a case of simple presumption upon Divine interposition, the perverse temper of the Israelites on that occasion may be wanting, yet the essence of their fault is involved in it; a bold and unauthorized demand being made upon God in our own will for the exercise of his power. The appositeness of the quotation is therefore apparent.

Verse 8. *Into an exceeding high mountain, &c.*—The scene is here again changed into the same wilderness, or some other elevated region. From some of the mountains of Palestine the views are very extensive, as Mount Nebo, from the top of which Moses saw "all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea," the Mediterranean, "and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, unto Zoar." Modern travellers have given their testimony to the vastness of the prospect opened also from some other mountains. Perhaps, as the old dominions of Judah and Israel were now divided into several provinces and tetrarchies, popularly called "kingdoms," no more is meant by the "kingdoms of the world" than those, the states into which the ancient kingdom of David was now divided; for in this restricted sense the original word is sometimes used. But if "the world" be taken in a more extensive meaning, then, as from such a height, a vast landscape of woods, rivers, lakes, fertile fields, villages, towns, and opulent and splendid cities, would be exhibited, the tempter might from such a scene take occasion to descant upon other and still more glorious kingdoms of the civilized "world;" especially that vast portion of it comprised in the Roman empire, itself often called "the world;" using the actual scene before them to give effect to the picture, which was drawn no doubt with a powerful eloquence. In support of this it may be said that the Greek word rendered "to show," like the Latin *ostendere*, and indeed the English verb itself, does not necessarily signify to exhibit to the sight; but also to describe and make known in any mode. In either sense there is no need to suppose that phantasms and images of worldly regal splendour were supernaturally produced to give effect to the temptation. It must be confessed, however, that the natural import of the words of Matthew leans this way; and St. Luke's words, who says that he "showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," still more so. But if this should be allowed, it gives no weight to the notion of those who think that the whole temptation took place in a vision; for there is an essential difference between a transaction and a vision, and the connecting of phantasms or aerial, optical appearances with a real scene, which do not affect the mental faculties of the beholder. But whether this preternatural illusion, favoured by the situation, did take place, or the kingdoms of Palestine only were represented to the eye, the devil in desperation now undisguises himself, and makes a bold attack upon our Lord, hoping to influence his mind with the ambition of attaining a splendid earthly monarchy; and that he presented this temptation in his proper character as Satan, is manifest, from his declaration, Luke iv, 6, "For that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it;" a falsehood worthy of the "father of lies," but yet often to appearance, and considering the manner in which earthly power was acquired in that age, and is often acquired now, had great verisimilitude; and it was true, in fact, that he had established a dark and polluted, though not an uncontrolled, dominion among the nations.

Verse 9. *If thou wilt fall down and worship me.*—This mode of paying homage was exacted by eastern monarchs; but, when understood to imply a reference to the Divinity of the person so honoured, was refused by Jews and Christians. Here it is manifest from the answer of our Lord, that it was demanded by Satan as the god and absolute ruler of the world; on which our Lord indignantly rebukes him: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Our Lord here showed both that he knew Satan, and that he had power to command him away,—a proof that his submission to the humiliation and pain of these temptations had been voluntary; and that they were endured not for his own sake, but for ours.

Verse 12. *He departed into Galilee.*—This is the commencement of a distinct part of St. Matthew's gospel, and contains a narrative of the acts and discourses of our Lord in Galilee; not the Galilee over which Herod

thee hence, Satan; for it is written, [e] Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

12 ¶ [f] Now when Jesus had heard that John was *cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 [g] The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

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[e] Deut. vi, 13; x, 20.—[f] Mark i, 14; Luke iv, 14; John iv, 43.—* Or, *delivered up.*—[g] Isaiah xi, 1.

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who had cast John into prison ruled; but Galilee of the Gentiles, so called because it had a great mixture of Gentiles in the population; the coasts of the lake of Tiberias, in the dominions of Philip the tetrarch.

Verse 13. *He came and dwelt in Capernaum.*—Henceforward Capernaum is to be considered as Christ's place of residence. Hence it is called "his own city." It was upon "the coast" of "the sea" of Galilee; and gave him easy access by water to many very populous districts, where he delivered many of his discourses, and wrought his astonishing miracles; but from this country he went up thrice in the year, at the great feasts, to Jerusalem.

Verse 14. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.*—St. Matthew begins his quotation with a part of the first verse of Isaiah ix, which has led some to refer the former part of the verse to the preceding chapter; so that a distinct prophecy will begin with "the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali," &c., which tribes formerly possessed what was afterward called Galilee of the Gentiles. Bishop Lowth, however, following Mr. Mede, begins the prophecy as in our Bibles, with the whole of the first verse, and translates it, "But there shall not hereafter be darkness in the land which was distressed; in the former time, (alluding to the Assyrian invasion, and the captivity of the ten tribes,) he debased the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time he hath made it glorious, even the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that walked in darkness," &c. To prevent these countries from being confounded with Peræa, which is called "beyond Jordan," in verse 25, Περαν του Ιορδανου may be rendered, "on the Jordan," on this side Jordan, which was the situation of Galilee, with reference to Judea, where Isaiah delivered his prophecies. Περαν in this sense is a translation of עבר which signifies *near to*, as well as *beyond*. There can be no pretence here to suppose an accommodation of this prediction quoted from Isaiah ix, since it stands in connection with that illustrious prophecy of Christ, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," &c. Here the Divine Saviour, so predicted, rises as the light of the world upon "Galilee of the Gentiles," a province which had within itself a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles; being partly inhabited, says Strabo, by Egyptians, Arabians, and Phenicians, and so was a striking emblem of the whole world of Jews and Gentiles. These "sat in darkness," in ignorance of God and spiritual things, and "in the region and shadow of death;" expressions used for the grave, and for the obscure abodes of the departed spirits of the wicked in the invisible world; and, by a strong and impressive metaphor, they are used to describe the misery, heplessness, and danger of a people without truth and piety. In a still stronger sense they apply to all the pagan Gentile nations, and the Jews in that state of unbelief and rejection in which they have been for so many ages. But as Christ fixed his dwelling in Galilee of the Gentiles as THE LIGHT in these regions of darkness, and THE LIFE amidst these shadowy abodes of death, and filled this benighted country with his heavenly doctrine; so shall this glorious prophecy, one of those which, as Lord Bacon says, have "a *germinant* accomplishment," be in every succeeding age more extensively fulfilled, until "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Isaiah uses the phrase, "*walked* in darkness," and St. Matthew, "*sat*," the meaning of which is the same; each, in the Hebrew mode of speaking, signifying TO BE or TO DWELL.

Verse 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach, &c.*—He fully employed himself henceforth in his public ministry; and to show that the doctrine of the necessity of *repentance* was not to be confined to John's dispensation, he himself begins by preaching it as a necessary preparation for that spiritual kingdom which he was about to establish; and thus he taught all his servants, by his own example, where their ministry was to BEGIN. In that respect he took up the dispensation of John the Baptist into his own, and laid the foundations of his religion in

17 ¶ [h] From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 ¶ [i] And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

[h] Mark i, 14.

[i] Mark i, 16.

"repentance toward God," as well as faith in his own offices.

Verse 18. *Walking by the sea of Galilee.*—This was otherwise called the sea or lake of Tiberias, from the city of that name which was built on its western shore by Herod the tetrarch, and so named in honour of Tiberius Cesar. This inland sea had also the appellation of the lake of Gennesaret; and in the Old Testament is called "the sea of Cinnereth." It is between seventeen and eighteen miles in length, and near six in breadth. It is surrounded with a varied scenery of mountains and valleys; is generally smooth and tranquil, but subject to storms of wind suddenly beating down upon it from the mountains.

Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother.—These had been disciples of John the Baptist; but this was not their first calling, which is related John i, 37, &c. At first, therefore, they only continued with Christ for a time; now they were more specially called to "follow" him, and to abandon their occupation to be trained up to be apostles for Christ, by constant attendance upon his teaching, and observance of his example, and of those mighty works by which he demonstrated himself to be "*sent of God.*" They and others were first called by Christ as disciples; afterward he chose twelve apostles to be "with him always," Mark iii, 14.

For they were fishers.—Why then did our Lord choose men in this humble station?—The answer is, 1. That they were pious men, the fruit of the ministry of John the Baptist. 2. That it might in future be acknowledged, that "the excellency of the power was of God, not of man." That the Gospel might appear to all not to be a device of human genius and subtlety, but "the wisdom of God, and the power of God." These "fishers" nothing but that wisdom and that power could make *fishers of men*, in the sense of our Lord; which meant, not only to bring men into the visible community of Christians, but into a state of personal reconciliation with God, and the experience of his regenerating grace. No minister "catches men" until these changes are effected in them by his labours; and his instrumentality as to these stupendous results, affecting the present and eternal interests of his hearers, can only be rendered effectual by the constant coworking of a Divine power. The metaphor suited these circumstances; they had been successful in their occupation as fishermen; now they were to be appointed to the office of instructing and saving souls, and our Lord promises to give them good success in that loftier calling.

Verse 21. *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.*—There was another James, the son of Alpheus. These were also distinguished by the former being called James the Greater, and the latter James the Less; which was probably a distinction founded upon seniority. The John here mentioned was "the beloved disciple." He, it is probable, had previously become a disciple of Christ at the same time with Andrew and Simon Peter, though he suppresses his name in the account, John i, 35.

In a ship.—Πλοιον denotes a vessel of any size. *In a boat* is somewhat too diminutive a rendering; *in a ship*, too stately. A *fishing vessel* may express the precise idea.

Verse 23. *Teaching in their synagogues.*—The antiquity of synagogues is a matter of dispute, but at least from the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, they were established in all their towns and cities, and in the larger cities were very numerous. This was the case also in foreign countries wherever the Jews resided. They were not places for offering sacrifices, which could only be done at Jerusalem, but for public worship on the Sabbath; comprising the reading of the law and the prophets, exhortation, and the oblation of alms. Their officers were, 1. The ruler of the synagogue, αρχισυναγωγος, who presided, and called persons to read the sections for the day, or to exhort, out of the congregation assembled, unless some one voluntarily offered himself, for which it appears there was full liberty

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

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given. 2. The elders of the synagogue, πρεσβυτεροι, who were the counsellors of the ruler, and with him formed a court for the settling of disputes, and the punishment of minor offences by expulsion or the infliction of "forty stripes save one." Hence our Lord foretells that his disciples should be "scourged in the synagogues;" and allusion is made several times in the Gospel to the penalty of being "cast out of the synagogue." 3. The collectors of alms, διακονοι, deacons. 4. The servants. The Jews who were unable to go up to Jerusalem on these great festivals are supposed to have had worship in the synagogue on those festivals as well as the Sabbath. This important institution of synagogues, where a congregation was always to be met with on the Sabbath, and often at other times, and where liberty of exhortation and of interpretation was allowed to qualified persons, our Lord availed himself of to teach his heavenly doctrine; and itinerated through all Galilee, *preaching the Gospel of the kingdom*. It was also by ministering in synagogues that the apostles gathered Churches in different parts of the world; and when Christian congregations were formed, they followed, during the first ages, nearly the same mode of worship as that of the synagogues, with the addition of the Lord's Supper.

Sickness and disease.—These terms are often used promiscuously; but if any distinction can be made, νοσος rather signifies a violent disorder; μαλακια, a chronic debility. In the next verse is added, *divers diseases and torments*, with which people were seized and *bound;* by which are probably meant those torturing spasmodic affections to which the people of those countries are liable, as tetanus, spasmodic cholera, as well as rheumatic and other more lingering maladies, &c. Those which were possessed with devils, δαιμονιζομενους, (see the following note,) and those who were *lunatic*, σεληνιαζομενους; that is, epileptic; and perhaps also deranged patients, whose disease was generally thought to be affected by the age of the MOON, and hence the name both in Greek and English; *and those that had the palsy*, παραλυτικους, the paralytic. All these disorders are mentioned at once, to indicate the immense number of sick persons that were brought to Christ, and his unbounded benevolence and power. Here truly we see the light shining upon these Galileans and Syrians, the people who sat in darkness and the region and shadow of death, as "the Sun of righteousness rising with HEALING in his wings."

Verse 24. *Those possessed with devils.*—An affliction, calamitous beyond all others, and therefore not only distinguished from the diseases which follow, but put at the head of them; and the removal of which, even more decidedly than any other, marked the Divine power of Christ, and set the broadest seal upon his mission: "But if I with the FINGER OF GOD cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you," Luke xi, 20. The word used in such cases is δαιμων, a term applied by the Greeks to their gods; but which the Jews applied only to evil spirits, in the number of which indeed they reckoned the Gentile deities. Very strenuous have been the attempts of a certain class of commentators to resolve these demoniacal possessions into madness, and other disorders, which they say the Jews popularly ascribed to evil spirits, as the ignorant among ourselves ascribe extraordinary complaints to witchcraft. But who does not see that this theory seriously compromises the character of our Lord himself?—because it supposes him to have practised upon the credulity and ignorance of the people, and to have falsely represented the casting out of devils as a stronger proof of the Divine power than the healing of diseases; whereas, according to this view, it was but an act of the same kind. How, also, will they reconcile to this theory the conduct of our Lord, who addressed them as beings separate from, and independent of, the possessed; and held conversations with them? How, again, will they account for the use of the phrase "casting" them out? how, that those afflicted persons, who were possessed, should UNIFORMLY address Jesus as the Messiah? And, finally, how can the history of the devils being permitted to enter the herd of swine be interpreted consistently with common sense, unless an actual possession of men by evil spirits, inflicting torments, and producing and exasperating diseases, be admitted? Human philosophy must necessarily be unable to penetrate the mystery of this permitted evil, because the invisible world and its laws cannot be made the subject of investigation; but with such consequences as must follow from the rejection of the historical character of the narrative, no modest or serious man will dare to entangle himself. Better reject the revelation of God entirely, than set up a mode of interpretation which renders its meaning uncertain, and its use doubtful. (See

note on verse 1.) "When," says Campbell, "I find mention made of the number of demons in particular possessions, their actions so expressly distinguished from those of the man possessed, conversations held by the former in regard to the disposal of them after their expulsion, and accounts given how they were actually disposed of; when I find desires and passions ascribed peculiarly to them, and similitudes taken from the conduct which they usually observe, it is impossible for me to deny their existence."

Verse 25. *And there followed him great multitudes, &c.*—So widely did his fame spread, and so powerful an impression was made, that the news of the actions and discourses of this great prophet was spread from one part to another, until *great multitudes* followed him *from Galilee*, both Upper and Lower *and from Decapolis*, a part of Syria, lying on the east of the sea of Galilee, and so named from its ten cities; and *from Jerusalem*, whither his fame had also spread, though as yet he had not visited it since the commencement of his public ministry; and *from Judea*, that is, Judea properly so called; and *from beyond Jordan*, which was a distinct country, named otherwise Peræa. (See the maps of Palestine.)

CHAPTER V.

1 Christ beginneth his sermon in the mount: 3 declaring who are blessed, 13 who are the salt of the earth, 14 the light of the world, the city on a hill, 15 the candle: 17 that he came to fulfil the law. 21 What it is to kill, 27 to commit adultery, 33 to swear: 38 exhorteth to suffer wrong, 44 to love even our enemies, 48 and to labour after perfectness.

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

CHAPTER V. Verse 1. *And seeing the multitudes, &c.*—Here both *the multitudes*, and his *disciples*, are mentioned distinctly as his auditors. Probably his disciples sat in a semicircle at his feet, as was customary with the disciples of the Jewish doctors. "The master," says Maimonides, "sits in the chief place, and the disciples before him in a circuit, so that they all see the master, and hear his words." The general audience were at some distance; for it is evident from some passages in this discourse, such as, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Ye are the light of the world," that it was immediately addressed to his disciples as nearest to him, and separate from the rest. But Christ publicly showed what those doctrines were, to the knowledge and practice of which he was training up his more intimate followers, and for the publication of which to others he was thus qualifying them. It may throw some light upon our Lord's taking upon himself the office of a public teacher, a circumstance which excited no surprise, and was in fact in itself nothing new, to remark, that any man skilled in the law appears to have had the right to become a doctor or teacher of it, to such disciples as chose to attend his discourses; and these disciples not only attended him at some usual place of teaching, but followed him from place to place, doing him honour as their instructer.

At what exact period of our Lord's ministry the sermon on the mount was delivered, we have no particular account. The place was near Capernaum, and the time early, but subsequent to the calling of several of the apostles, and after his fame had spread throughout Palestine, as stated in the preceding chapter. In the synagogues of Galilee he had delivered many discourses on the subject of his "kingdom;" and the effect had been that many now openly professed to be his disciples. That his sermon on this occasion was one continued discourse, and not, as some have supposed, a collection of fragments, delivered at different times, is manifest both from the introductory, and the concluding remarks of the evangelists: "Multitudes" follow him to the mountain; they listen, and express their astonishment when he had "ended these sayings;" and when he was "come down from the mountain great multitudes" still follow him. We must therefore conclude that all which St. Matthew has inserted between these historical remarks as "the sayings" of our Lord, were at that time delivered consecutively. The very expression also, *he opened his mouth and taught them saying*, is only used to indicate the commencement of a solemn and lengthened discourse. It was a phrase frequent among them, as a notice that they were about to deliver something weighty and deliberate, "I will open my mouth in a parable," Psalm lxxviii, 2. So also Virgil, *finem dedit ore loquendi*, "he finished speaking *with his mouth*." On this Divine sermon we may remark generally, that it not only explains and inculcates the most important truths, but that it has frequent reference to those reli-

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 [a] Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[a] St. Luke, chap. vi, 20

gious errors which the Jewish doctors of different sects had spread among the people, to the perversion of the meaning of the sacred writings, and the destruction of practical piety Hence Lightfoot well observes, though somewhat too strongly, "To the explanation of this discourse is required quick and ready versedness in the records of the Jews; for Christ hath an eye and reference to their language, doctrines, customs, traditions, and opinions, in almost every line."

Christ shows first who are the truly blessed, or rather *happy* persons, μακαριοι, that is, in what the true felicity of man consists; a subject of great debate among heathen sages, whose opinions as to the chief good of man were almost equally numerous and contradictory. "To this point," says one, "three hundred sects of philosophers have taught as many different ways; but to us one alone is fully sufficient." On this subject, also, the Jewish teachers, seconded by their own proud and carnal hearts, had fatally misled the people, though their own Scriptures contained most explicit and infallible declarations on this subject. They might indeed have learned from David, that "blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered; the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile," expressions which are to be taken to exclude all from true felicity who stand not in this relation of friendship with God, and who had not been in heart purged from sin. But they placed happiness in wealth and worldly distinctions, and religion in superstition and ceremony; which generated pride in a fancied holiness, and a blind confidence in an external covenant relation to God as the seed of Abraham. Our Lord opens quite contrary views, and makes the true felicity of man to arise from the moral state of his heart, and shows that it is entirely independent of outward circumstances. All the beatitudes must therefore be interpreted spiritually, and not under those low views in which they are placed by some commentators, who seem little to understand the whole bearing of this discourse, or the true character of Christianity itself, THE SOLE OBJECT OF WHICH IS TO BRING THE HEART OF MAN BACK *to God, and to renew it in righteousness and true* HOLINESS, in order to restore happiness to the INDIVIDUAL, and to the WORLD.

Verse 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*—Not the poor in opposition to the rich, for it is manifestly one great object of our Lord to call off the attention of his hearers from outward circumstances as necessarily connected with true felicity; nor those, as Grotius has it, "poor in mind," that is, patiently and contentedly poor, as though our Lord were no more than a heathen teacher of the advantages of contentment. Poverty of spirit signifies the same thing as humility, considered in a religious sense; or, at least, it is the principle of humility, and so may be the character of men of widely different conditions, as to external rank, and excludes the notion of Campbell, and others subsequent to Grotius, who resolve it into that disposition which accommodates itself without murmuring to poor circumstances. There are many such contented persons who have no pretence at all to spirituality of mind; and how that should form any special qualification for "the kingdom of heaven," such writers fail to show. Our Lord evidently alludes to Isaiah lxvi, 2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor," or lowly, "and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—Poverty of spirit implies a penitential sense of our guilt as sinners, and a deep conviction of our unworthiness and natural imbecility in all things relating to our salvation, accompanied by an entire dependence upon God for counsel, strength, and grace. It is the root of all true faith or trust in God; the exciting cause of that devotional habit which expresses itself in earnest, constant breathings after intercourse with him, and the exertion of his influence upon us; and it excludes all religious pride and boasting, for which the Jews, through their want of true humility, were so often reproved by Christ.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Such were the only persons in a suitable state of mind to receive the new dispensation of truth and mercy introduced by Christ, and with this preparation of mind they would infallibly embrace it, with its spiritual benefits here and its rewards hereafter; for the kingdom of heaven established by Christ being spiritual, it comprehends both grace here, and glory hereafter. This beatitude is not to be confined to those to whom the Gospel was first preached. "The kingdom of heaven" is always "among" many who enter not into it for want of true poverty of spirit. To receive Christianity as a Divine institution, and, from a sense of our danger and necessity, to press, in the earnestness of prayer, and the vigorous actings of faith, into the personal experience of its spiritual blessings and future hopes, are distinct things; and through this lowly gate of humility only can we enter. The order of grace, as above stated, is,—"REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the Gospel." Then comes that true "blessedness" which flows from the establishment of that kingdom

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 [b] Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

[b] Psalm xxxvii, 11.

of God in our hearts, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Verse 4. *Blessed are they that mourn, &c.*—This on the first view appears paradoxical; nor is it to be explained by referring the *mourning* and the subsequent *comfort* merely to outward things as their cause. There is, indeed, no blessedness in being plunged into afflictions to have the comfort of being ultimately relieved from them. This "saying" of our Lord may be taken, 1. To refer to that inward distress which the recollection of our offences against God produces in a contrite heart. It implies, however, tenderness as well as alarm; it regards sin against God in his characters of goodness and love, as well as those of majesty and justice; and hence that loathing of it, and those strong struggles to get free from its bondage, which characterize a genuine repentance. Such mourners are pronounced blessed by our Lord, not in reference to their present state, which is one of wretchedness; but to the "comfort" of the Holy Ghost which shall assuredly follow. To all such is promised the remission of sins, and the pledge of adoption in the abiding presence and solacing influence of "the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." From true poverty of spirit proceeds this holy mourning, as from its principle. 2. It may also respect the afflictions of good men, considered in reference to those *moral ends* which we know from the doctrine of providence, as it is taught by our Lord and his apostles, the sufferings of *such* persons actually accomplish under Divine direction. The "comfort" however, in such cases, is not always the removal of afflictive circumstances. These may remain, and yet the promise of Christ shall stand firm. That consolation arises from the instruction and correction which sanctified troubles administer under the influence of grace; the special supports which are given in answer to prayer; the refining of the affections of the soul from remaining earthliness; and the stronger and more lively anticipations of that eternal rest where there shall be "no more pain, nor tears, nor death."

Verse 5. *Blessed are the meek.*—Meekness implies the absence of all irascible and malignant passions, and is the fruit of regenerating grace. It is a state of the soul produced by the habitual and supreme influence of prudence and benevolence. It is, therefore, patient of sufferings, and forgiving of injuries; and, however contrary the natural constitution of the mind may be to this affection, it is the certain effect of the Holy Spirit's influence, fully received, to produce it in all who seek it. The example of Christ specially enforces this temper, in which strength and loveliness are so strikingly combined, upon his followers, and it is carefully enjoined in the writings of his apostles as an essential branch of true religion; for in the Christian system doctrines and external ordinances are regarded only as MEANS to the attainment of good principles, benevolent affections, and rightly ordered words and actions, and have no other value assigned them; a circumstance which always distinguishes true Christianity from its own corrupted forms, and from all the systems of Jewish and Gentile superstition. Meekness was little regarded as an element of practical piety among the Jews; though sometimes praised by their writers, and strongly urged in their Scriptures. For this reason, as well as to inculcate it upon all his followers, our Lord gives it an eminent place in this discourse, which formally unfolds the principles and characters of his religion.

For they shall inherit the earth.—Γῆ, here rendered earth, often means, in Scripture, the land of Judea. Those seem to err who confine this promise to the calm and placid enjoyment of life, which meekness of spirit tends to promote. This is undoubtedly true, as well as that a meek spirit often creates friends and secures advantages. But far below the meaning of our Lord are these earthly views. The language of the promise is taken from the promises made to the Jews, that they should inherit the land of Canaan, but from the time of Abraham, Canaan was invested with a typical character, and represented to the faith and hope of spiritually-minded Jews, the great inheritance of heaven. That was "the land afar off," where "the King" was to be seen in his "beauty," or, in other words, where a more glorious display was to be made of the majesty and worship of God, than in the temple of Jerusalem, even while God himself dwelt there, and all the pomp of the Levitical worship was observed. To the meek, therefore, the inheritance of the heavenly Canaan is here promised; and none but the meek shall inherit it; for without this essential branch of "holiness, no man shall see the Lord." A beautiful contrast may also be remarked in this passage. The Jews came into possession of the land of Canaan through deeds of blood and force of arms; but the Christian warfare is not carnal but spiritual; and patience, humility, gentleness, and charity, are the arms by which we urge our way into the inheritance of heaven. Nor was our Lord's use of the phrase, "inheriting the earth," in the sense of enjoying future felicity, at all out of the common way of speaking among the Jews. Maimonides, following earlier authorities, interprets "inheriting the

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: [c] for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

[c] Isaiah lxv, 13.

8 [d] Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

[d] Psalm xxiv, 4.

land for ever," in Isaiah lx, 21, in a figurative sense, as referring to the happiness of a future state; and perhaps there was floating in Plato's mind some notion of terrestrial things being, in some respects, the types and emblems of heavenly ones; he calls heaven, "as it were the TRUE EARTH," ὡς ἀληθῶς γῆ.

> Ah! what is death? 'Tis life's vast shore,
> Where vanities are vain no more;
> Where all pursuits their goal obtain,
> And *life is all retouch'd again.* GAMBOLD.

Verse 6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst, &c.*—Here the strong desires of the mind are represented by the appetites of the body, a metaphor common in all languages. *Righteousness* is to be taken in the sense of holiness; which consists in the entire renewal of the soul after the image of God; which cannot be obtained without vehement desires, prayers, and efforts, and with which all those shall be abundantly satisfied who thus seek it. In them there shall be no lack of any virtue to complete the full and mature character of a true Christian. Desires so strong to be delivered from all sin, and to be endued with all moral excellences, must necessarily produce constant and earnest prayers to God for the renewing influences of his grace; but as God worketh in man "to will and to do," that he may be encouraged to "work out his own salvation," so in proportion to the sincerity with which we seek to obtain and to preserve a truly righteous state of heart, will be the diligence we shall use in all those means which God has appointed for the mortification of sin, the resistance of temptation, and the exercise of our virtues. Some writers, observing that διψαω in classical writers governs a genitive case, suppose an ellipsis of δια before δικαιοσυνην, and so take the passage to be a declaration of the happiness of those who suffer hunger and thirst *for the sake of* righteousness; which would, however, make it the same benediction as that in verses 10 and 11. But in Hellenistic Greek διψαω is found followed with an accusative, as in the text; instances of which occur in the Septuagint, the Wisdom of Solomon, in Philo and Josephus.

Verse 7. *Blessed are the merciful, &c.*—The exercise of mercy to others is often enjoined by our Lord with the strongest emphasis, and he enforces it by the highest example, that of God our heavenly Father; by the utter inconsistency of a selfish, obdurate disposition with the profession of his religion; and by the fearful menace of mercy being withheld from us if we deny it to others. To be merciful, implies a sympathizing regard to the miseries of others; liberality in relieving their distresses according to our utmost power; the ready forgiveness of offences, and the remission of obligations due to ourselves when the parties are unable to discharge them. And often, as to outward things, even is the promise fulfilled, that *the merciful shall obtain mercy* from God, in the gracious interpositions of his providence, and in the forgiveness of our sins. The latter is doubtless included in "obtaining mercy;" and though we cannot plead the exercise of mercy to others as giving us any claim upon so undeserved a blessing, yet thereby we remove out of the way that which would be an insuperable obstacle to the exercise of the mercy of God as to our own delinquencies and violated obligations.

Verse 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart.*—Here again our Lord, according to the spirit and intent of his whole discourse, turns the attention of his hearers from those outward purifications which the more superstitious Jews, and especially the Pharisees, so carefully preached, and the importance of which they so greatly exaggerated, to the purification of the HEART. In that lies the true fountain of evil; and there the sanctification of man must begin and be completed. This purity of heart respects the intention, in opposition to religious hypocrisy; and so consists in the simple, unmixed desire to please God in all things: it implies, also, the extirpation of all unholy desires, imaginations, tendencies, and affections. But this cannot be a negative state only; the absence of all evil is necessarily the presence of all good. Hence, in this condition of mind, truth becomes the clear light of the judgment, and the exact rule of conscience; the will is rendered cheerfully submissive to Divine authority; God is loved "with all the heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves;" and "whatsoever things are" externally, and in their outward, practical manifestation, "true, whatsoever things are" honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," the root of all, if they are real, and not simulated virtues, is a pure heart; a nature, to use St. Paul's words, "sanctified wholly;" to effect which entire sanctification

10 [e] Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of [f] evil against you *falsely for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:

[e] 1 Peter iii, 14.

[f] 1 Peter iv, 14.—* Greek, *lying*.

of man is the peculiar and glorious work of the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel.

For they shall see God.—This is not merely to enjoy his favour and special protection here and hereafter, as the phrase is taken by some to import. It has a larger meaning; and must be interpreted by other scriptures. Moses "endured, as SEEING Him who is invisible;" that is, he had respect to the power and faithfulness of a present God, and was thus preserved from fearing the wrath of Pharaoh. David had respect to God, setting him always "at his right hand," and thus, through his trust in him, was not "moved," not agitated or oppressed, by his troubles. We have also the phrases of "walking in the light of God's countenance," and of "his face being turned toward the objects of his favour;" both of which imply intimate and gracious intercourse between God and his people. An habitual regard to the invisible Creator and Preserver in his visible works, and the recognition of his agency, and a right understanding of his purposes, both in judgments and in mercies, are also acts by which we are said to see God; and rightly to understand the Gospel of Christ, and so to love the truth which it reveals, and habitually and affectionately to meditate upon it, is called "beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord." In all these respects the pure in heart *see God* on earth; and the more fully and habitually so, as their purity becomes more perfect. The promise, however, chiefly respects a future life. To see God, as he manifests himself to the glorified spirits of the redeemed in heaven, has from the beginning been the crowning hope of good men, and formed their noblest conception of future felicity and glory. Thus Job, "In my flesh shall I SEE God;" and of the man that "walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly," Isaiah says, "Thine eyes shall SEE THE KING in his beauty."—Concurring with these views, and with special reference to these very words of our Saviour, St. John has the following glowing passage: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall SEE HIM AS HE IS. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Those who would confine the purity of heart spoken of in this verse to purity of intention, would not greatly err, if they extended the notion as far as Bernard, who defines purity of intention to consist "in directing all our actions to the honour of God, the good of our neighbour, and the preservation of a good conscience." But how vast how complete a change in man's moral nature does all this necessarily suppose! a change only to be accomplished by the great power of God, "working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, that we may be perfect in every good work to do his will."

Verse 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers.*—This is equivalent to οι ποιουντες την ειρηνην, persons who, being themselves of a pacific disposition, exert themselves as to others to allay strifes, reconcile enmities, prevent wars and tumults, and to preserve society in harmony and charity. There is in this a tacit reproof of the factious and quarrelsome spirit of the Jews, and also of that eagerness to be led to war, in order to obtain the supremacy over other nations under the banners of their expected military Messiah, which was so much indulged by their greatest zealots. Now, however, the true Messiah speaks to them in his own appropriate character, as the Prince of peace, and declares that only the lovers and makers of peace are regarded as the children of God, and therefore the subjects of his kingdom: another indication to them of its purely spiritual nature; a character which it must retain to the end of time, unless the essential principles of Christianity are to be changed; a subject which ought to be well considered by those among ourselves, who indulge the Jewish dream of a visible and political reign of Christ. The reign of Christ is internal; it governs the hearts of men, and by them shall govern the world in tranquillity, when all, or the majority of our race shall have become subject, in their principles and affections, to its influence. So far as it now extends, its effect is to produce a pacific temper, and to harmonize the otherwise jarring elements of human society. We see this exemplified in pious families, and in those religious societies which retain most of their primitive simple heartedness, and most respect the rule of Christ, "to love one another." These are delightful portraits, though in miniature, of the ultimate effect of the religion of peace and charity upon larger communities, and finally upon all nations.

For they shall be called the children of God.—To be called the children of God may be regarded as a Hebraism for *to be* the children of God; or the sense is, they *shall be* emphatically entitled "the children of

for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: [5] but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

[5] Mark ix, 50; Luke xiv, 34.

God," who is "the God of peace." Thus St. Paul: "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear CHILDREN, and walk in love," Eph. v, 1, 2. All the children of God are lovers and promoters of peace; and those who are of a contrary disposition have no right to invest themselves with that high title, or to consider themselves as a part of the family of God.

Verse 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.*—The Pharisees and others looked for applause on account of their "righteousness;" and they acquired it in proportion to the opinion entertained of their sanctity. The righteousness of Christ's disciples was to expose them to obloquy and to persecution; yet the one was external and hypocritical, the other real and universal. He only that perfectly knew the human heart could predict, and that in an age when every appearance of extraordinary piety commanded a deeply respectful deference, that in the case of his disciples the highest religious attainments should render them the more odious, and expose them to every form of insult and cruelty which malignant ingenuity could invent. The true reason was, that their righteousness "*exceeded* the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees;" exceeded it as the result of penitence, humility, trust in God, and the renunciation of all the secret evils of the heart; and exceeded it in its uniform and universal practical character. It was therefore a standing reproof of that righteousness which consisted chiefly in formality and hypocrisy. And as the very charity of the Gospel bound those who received it to endeavour to remove the delusions of those who trusted in "the form of godliness, but denied its power," it was felt to be intrusive, troublesome, and provoking to bad and deceived men. These are the causes which have ever made the religion of Christ, when fully explained and earnestly enforced, the object of the hatred of the world. The religion of the superstitious and self-righteous consists with pride, worldliness, and many other vices, the mortification of which is required by true Christianity. Hence, hatred of the truth itself naturally transfers itself to those who advocate it, and disturb the carnal security of others by a faithful and zealous exhibition of its reproving light. If any one thinks that the case is much changed in the present day, let him enforce upon all he meets with the spiritual nature and obligations of Christianity, and he will not fail to discover that still "the carnal mind is enmity against God." The word rendered *persecute*, as Grotius well observes, is of forcible and extensive meaning. The Latin, *persequi*, does not express its force, which is rather to be taken in the sense of *vexare, exagitare*. We are not, therefore, with Beza, to confine it to the forensic sense, as *persequi judicio*; for it has not only been at the tribunals of tyrants that Christians have suffered persecution, but in the various forms of private malignity, and tumultuous popular commotion. It may also be remarked, that the most violent persecutors have been found among superstitious and fanatical men, who have themselves made great pretensions to some kind of sanctity. Antiochus Epiphanes was a fanatical idolater; the Jewish scribes and Pharisees pursued our Lord and his disciples with unrelenting bitterness; "trusted in themselves that they were righteous." Several of the Roman emperors who distinguished themselves most against the primitive Church were blind in their attachment to the popular religion; and popery and Mohammedanism would have been less cruel had they been less superstitious and self righteous.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Good men, in seasons of persecution, often enter most deeply into the experience of Christianity. It is only by maintaining the vigour of these graces, that they can maintain the ground on which they are exposed to attacks so constant and rude; and their immediate reward is a more intimate fellowship with God, and richer internal consolations. "As our afflictions abound our consolations abound." In this sense the kingdom of heaven may be truly said to be *theirs*, who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake;" though our Lord ultimately refers, as in the twelfth verse, to the rewards of another life. Among the crowns of heaven the martyr's crown is the most glorious. Hence the strong exhortation, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven."

For so persecuted they the prophets, &c.—If γαρ be taken in its most common import as a causative conjunction, then the reason for this joy of the persecuted disciples of Christ, as drawn from the case of the prophets, is, that as those venerable persons, notwithstanding their persecutions, were then enjoying the high rewards of heaven, the disciples were assured that the same felicities and honours would as certainly follow their sufferings for the same cause. But if γαρ be taken as a particle of affirmation, then the

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.
15 Neither do men light [h] a candle, and put it under a * bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

[h] Mark iv, 21; Luke viii, 16; xi, 33.

* The word in the original signifieth, *a measure containing about a pint less than a peck.*

intention of Christ was to remove all surprise from the minds of men, that the teachers of his religion should be hated and injured solely on that account. The answer to this tacit objection, therefore, is, As the holy prophets were persecuted by bad men, so bad men will always be disposed to hate and persecute my holy and zealous disciples. The former sense is, I think, to be preferred.

Verse 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth.*—This is undoubtedly spoken of the true disciples of Christ. Salt furnishes metaphor, both to profane and sacred writers, to express the qualities and effects of wisdom, truth, and goodness. The particular property of this mineral which is here referred to is its resistance to putrefaction. In the midst of that which is corrupt it preserves its own purity; and it diffuses its own influence through the mass of several substances, and communicates to them its own incorruptibility. Thus the character and the public influence of true Christians are each forcibly represented. *The earth* signifies, not the land of Judea, as in verse 5, but the whole world. This is made evident by what follows, which is but the same idea placed under another aspect: "Ye are the light of the world," referring to the sun, which gives light to all nations. Christianity, exemplified, maintained, and diffused by the disciples of Christ, was designed for the illumination and salvation of all mankind. Thus our Lord, even at this early period, taught that the benefits of his mission were not to be confined to the Jews only; a subject, however, which was not as yet fully apprehended by his hearers, though in perfect accordance with the prophecies of their own Scriptures.

But if the salt have lost his savour.—We have no indigenous salt of this description; but the salt of Judea was the rock or fossil salt, or else that left by the evaporation of salt lakes on the borders of the Dead Sea. Both these kinds of salt were apt to lose their pungency. Maundrell in his travels broke off a piece of salt from a rock, and found that externally, through exposure to the atmosphere, it had become tasteless; but the inner part, where it had been joined to the rock, retained its savour. Schoettgen has shown that considerable quantities of salt were used in sacrifice, and that when any part of it had been found tasteless, it was thrown upon the floor of the court of the temple. This, however, better explains a similar passage in Mark ix, 49, 50: "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good," &c, where the use of salt in the sacrifices is expressly referred to. Here the general qualities of good salt to preserve and to communicate its own incorruptibility are those referred to; and whether in the temple, or in domestic use, if any portion of salt was found to have lost its saltness, it would, as a matter of course, be thrown away, and so be *trampled under foot.* The savourless salt represents those who have lost the vital influence of piety. Neither does their conversation savour of the things of God; nor do their conduct and spirit exert a sanctifying influence upon others. Their profession may remain; the doctrines of Christ may still generally be held; all the external signs of piety may be exhibited by them; but the spirit, the PUNGENCY, is gone. The dry and sapless branch, and the tasteless and unsavoury salt, are their proper emblems. And as the salt which had lost its savour was rejected from those nobler uses for which it had become unfit, and cast upon the ground to be trodden under foot, so the disowning of unfaithful disciples by Christ, and their degradation and punishment, are thus strongly represented for the admonition of the careless. The expression, "wherewith shall it be salted," appears not to have been rightly understood by those interpreters who think that it imports that the savour of grace can never be regained, and that therefore the case of hopeless apostates is represented under this figure. It was rather the intention of our Lord to impress his disciples with the sin and danger of being USELESS to mankind, through the neglect of personal and influential piety. "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall IT," that is, *the earth*, "be salted?" or purified. To be useless, is, in fact, to be injurious; and he who neglects his own salvation is a hinderance to many others. Thus is his guilt aggravated.—Μωρανω answers to the Hebrew word תפל, which signifies both *unsavouriness* and a *fool;* that is, a man destitute of both wisdom and goodness.

Verses 14, 15. *Ye are the light of the world, &c.*—In these verses we have three metaphors, which, equally with the former, are intended to impress the disciples of Christ with their duty to the world in general. They are all public, not merely private characters; they are to communicate, as well as to receive; and to consider themselves bound, by their very profession, to extend as far as possible the light and influence of their religion; they are therefore called, "the light

16 Let your light so shine before men, that [i] they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

[i] 1 Peter, chap. ii, 12.

of the world," in allusion to the sun; "a city set upon a hill;" and are farther compared to the house lamp, which was lighted in the evening, in every family in the common apartment. Perhaps there is here a reference to the threefold duty obligatory upon every true Christian, as a public character, to the *world*, to his *country*, and to his *family*. The SUN gives light to all the nations of the earth; and upon every Christian the obligation lies, according to his ability, to promote, by his prayers, his exertions, and his liberalities, the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth. The CITY set upon the hill alluded to, might be Jerusalem; for, whether this sermon was delivered in sight of the metropolis or not, we see from the constant references made in the Psalms to its lofty situation, that this was always an association in the mind of a Jew when he spoke of Jerusalem. It was the city "whose foundation was in the holy mountains." As the tribes were in the habit of going up to the great festivals, the lofty situation of Jerusalem, seen at great distances, would become matter of familiar remark. Josephus describes the distant view, crowned with its magnificent temple, and the rays of the sun reflected from its marble towers, as peculiarly striking. So conspicuous ought the Church of Christ to be in every nation in which it is planted; and so prominent in all its holy institutions, for the noblest of all patriotic purposes, the maintenance of the authority and influence of religion among all orders of the State. The family LAMP, placed upon its stand, and giving light to the family, seems to indicate the duty of domestic piety and zeal. Their houses were illuminated all night long by lamps placed upon a large *stand*, or, as our translation calls it, a "candlestick," fixed in the ground; from which the smaller lamps were lighted, which were to be used in the other apartments. Such is the office of the head of every Christian family, "to give light to all that are in the house," by his instructions and example.

Verse 16. *Let your light so shine, &c.*—This would be better rendered, "*So* let your light shine." As no one putteth a lamp under a bushel, *μοδιον*, a *measure*, to hide its light, so *let your light shine before men that they may see your good works*,—both the truth, of which you are to be the teachers and advocates, and all those holy works which become this truth, and commend it.

And glorify your Father, &c.—To glorify God here does not merely signify to give praise to him, but along with that to confess the truth and Divine origin of a religion teaching such truths, and raising men to so high characters of holiness, and under these views and impressions to embrace it.

Verse 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, &c.*—On this declaration so many great theological consequences depend, that it is highly important for us rightly to understand its import. The word rendered *to destroy*, signifies, primarily, *to loose*, *to dissolve*; and, when applied to a law, means *to abrogate* or *annul*. "The law" is used in two leading senses in the New Testament; for the whole Mosaic institute, and for the moral law, by way of eminence, the law whose substance is found in the ten commands "written and engraven on stones," and enforced in the writings of the prophets. The context so clearly confines our Lord's meaning to this moral law, that, had it not been for the occurrence of the word *πληρωσαι*, *to fulfil*, in this passage, one of the senses of which is *to accomplish*, no one probably would have extended our Lord's meaning to the ceremonial law, and to the prophecies in their strict sense as predictions; both of which were truly *fulfilled* in him; the former, by supplying the antitype to the type; the latter, by accomplishment. This word, however, also signifies, *to perfect*, or *complete*. The Greek fathers explain it by filling up a vessel to the brim, which was before but partially filled; and the completion of a picture previously sketched. This idea fully accords with what follows; for our Lord first, in the most solemn manner, asserts the continued obligation of the moral law, by declaring that "whosoever should break one of these least commandments, and should teach men so, should be called least in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, be rejected from it; which could only be spoken of the moral law; for as to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, his inspired apostles ultimately taught their followers to disregard them entirely. Secondly, he proceeds to give a more spiritual and extensive meaning to many of the moral precepts than we find explicitly contained in any part of the Old Testament; and thereby showed that all the precepts of the law, even those which he does not specify, were to be understood as controlling the inward thoughts and desires of the heart; and thus he *perfected* or *filled up* the revelation of the moral law; and by this act he placed himself on an equality with the original Lawgiver. By *the prophets* we are also to understand, not those writings of the prophets which contained predictions of fu-

18 For verily I say unto you, [k] Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

[k] St. Luke, chap. xvi, 17.

ture events, and especially of the future Christ, though most evidently accomplished in and by him; but those PRECEPTIVE parts of their writings, in which the moral law was enforced, and other injunctions of a moral kind founded upon, or suggested by it. That our Lord does not confine his expositions strictly to the law of the ten commandments is plain, from his selecting other points out of the juridical institutions of the Jews, (such, however, as have a manifest moral character and influence,) and either explaining or enlarging their sense, or else restraining them from misapplication. Such are those respecting divorce, swearing, and judicial retaliation. As to several other moral topics on which he dwells, such as almsgiving, ostentatious praying, covetousness, &c., they are also frequently adverted to in the reproofs and exhortations of the prophets; and these are placed by our Lord so manifestly upon their true principles, and exhibited in so strong a light of simple, searching truth, and so sanctioned by promises and threatenings, that he may most emphatically be said to have *perfected* the moral law, as it appears in the prophets also, and thus to have presented to us a revelation of "the will of God," as to "our sanctification," more complete than was ever before given to mankind. He does not formally re-enact the ancient law, but he lays down its perpetual obligation; he teaches us to go more deeply into its meaning as a law, not merely for the regulation of the conduct, but the government of the heart. Both on this occasion, and at various times through the course of his ministry, he ADDED also many particular precepts. It is of the same law of which our Lord speaks, and with evident reference to his words in this passage, that the Apostle Paul says, "Do we then make void THE LAW through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law," Rom. iii, 31. where he changes the term *to complete* or *perfect*, for that of "*to establish*," because it was the province, not of the servant but of the master, who was in fact the lawgiver himself, to COMPLETE what was lacking in the former revelations of the law of God to man, by authorized exposition, and by additions standing upon the same right of the speaker to command, and the same obligation of the hearer to obey. This view of our Lord's meaning renders quite irrelevant much criticism which has been expended upon the text when it is understood to comprehend the ceremonial law, to which our Lord indeed makes no allusion in the discourse which follows, and therefore cannot be supposed to have had any reference to it here. Dr. Marsh's attempt to prove that our Lord did not abolish even the Levitical law of Moses, or the outward forms of the Jewish religion, but left them to take their course, as not worthy his attention; whatever merit it may have, it has nothing to do with the text before us, which respects not the law of ceremonies, and affords therefore no illustration of it. There is, indeed, an important sense in which Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law; that is, its types, in his own person; for in his passion he realized them as fully as he accomplished the prophecies. Still this is not the point to which the text has respect; for by fulfilling the law of figures and shadows, he dissolved its obligations for ever; whereas, by fulfilling in the sense of *perfecting* or *completing* the moral law, he established it for ever.

Verse 18. *For verily I say unto you, &c.*—Αμην is most frequently used in a PRECATIVE sense, as at the end of prayers, and then it signifies *so let it be;* and is therefore rendered γενοιτο, *fiat*, by the LXX. In introducing a discourse, as here, and on many other occasions, by our Lord, who often repeats it, it is solemnly AFFIRMATIVE of the truth and importance of what follows, and has the sense of the Greek αληθως, the word used by St. Luke, and of our *verily*. An idle opinion has obtained among a few commentators, that the word *amen*, as employed by our Lord, has somewhat of the nature of an oath; to which they appear to have been led by observing it stated in Jewish writings, that he that says amen to an oath is equally bound with him that more formally makes it, and by the use of this word takes the oath upon himself. However casuistry might determine that question, is another consideration; but *amen* would, in that case, be used in its *precative* sense, and not as a mere *affirmative*, which is the case whenever it is employed by our Lord as introductory to any of his sayings; and to make him affirm them in the form of an oath, is as uncritical as it is repulsive.

Till heaven and earth pass.—This is a proverbial expression to signify, *through all time; to the end of the world.*

One jot or one tittle.—One ιωτα, *iota*, a Greek letter, which answers to the Hebrew י jod, the smallest of their alphabet. The "tittle," κεραια, was with the Hebrews the slight mark at the angle of some of their letters, distinguishing them from others similar in form, as ב from כ; ד from ר; and so the meaning is, that not the smallest part of the law should be abolished; for the Jews, as

19 [1]Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[1] James, chap. ii, 10.

Lightfoot remarks, use *jod*, their smallest letter, to express a short precept of their law.

Till all be fulfilled.—Εως αν παντα γενηται, *till all things be done*, or *accomplished*. Till the law, through the grace of the Gospel, has effected its original purpose, to subject men to the dominion of God. That it is the end of the Gospel, and a glorious display of its grace, to restore the dominion of the law over renewed minds, cannot be doubted by any who enter truly into the meaning of the words of St. Paul, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii, 3, 4. Thus, the authority of the law, and willing and entire obedience to it, are established over the fully regenerated on earth; and still more perfectly shall its holy rules, and their absolute obedience, be established for ever in heaven, among the glorified redeemed; while the same authority shall be manifested in the punishment of the obstinately disobedient over whom its awful majesty, and the eternally binding character of its penalty, DEATH, shall be established for ever. This DOUBLE fulfilment or completion of the ends of law is mentioned in the succeeding verses.

Verse 19. *Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, &c.*—*One of the least of these commandments* would have been a clearer rendering. *Whosoever shall break* any commandment of God, great or small, that is, wilfully, and presuming that Christianity has set him free from the obligation to obey the moral law, which is adopted by Christ as the law of his dispensation, and as it is explained and enforced by him. *And shall teach men so*, under whatever pretence of exalting Christ and his righteousness, Antinomian teachers may contemn the law, and deny its obligation upon Christians as a rule of holiness. *He shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.* He shall be deemed unworthy to be ranked among the subjects of my kingdom. Those commentators (and they are not a few) who take "the kingdom of heaven" here to mean the Christian Church, understand the phrase, "to be least in that kingdom," in the sense of not being esteemed in it. This is the view of Campbell, who follows many others. But what, then, we may ask, does our Lord mean when, in the very next verse, he declares that except our righteousness shall even *exceed* that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven? The visible Church on earth cannot, therefore, be intended; and we must refer the words to a future state into which that kingdom which Christ set up on earth extends. To be "the least in the kingdom of heaven," is only a softened form of expressing a strong truth, which yet, when rightly conceived, only serves to heighten the impression. So it was understood by Chrysostom; and this sense is necessarily attached to it by verse 20. Beside this, our Lord is evidently addressing himself to his disciples, and speaking of those who, under that character, would contend that their Master came to annul, or render indifferent, the moral law,—a heresy which has been, in fact, so frequent and so fatal in the Church, that one might expect our Lord, in his perfect prescience of the future, to set up a barrier against it. Into his Church on earth, such persons have unquestionably often "entered;" but our Lord declares that into his heavenly kingdom they shall not enter. Those also who think that there is in the words a reference to the violation of the precepts of the law by the Pharisees, under the influence of their corrupt traditions, appear to be in error. They are misled by the notion of Lightfoot, that reference is made in "every line" of this sermon to the perversions of the Jews; which is not true as to every part of the discourse, though it holds good in some. Were this theory to be applied throughout, it would but darken, and not illustrate this Divine discourse. With respect to the Pharisees, it is indeed indubitable, that, with great reverence and zeal for the law, that law was frequently violated by them; "they made it void by their traditions;" and what Maimonides says, was probably applicable in our Lord's time, "that the sanhedrim held, that it had power, for the time present, to make void an affirmative command, and to transgress a negative one, in order to turn many to their religion; or that, in order to prevent many of the Israelites from stumbling at other things, they might do whatever present circumstances rendered necessary." Thus, he adds, "The former wise men say, A man may profane one Sabbath in order to keep many Sabbaths." They therefore acted on the principle of doing evil that good might come; which has been the dishonest source of great moral corruption in Churches. Much more might be added in illustration of this, as to the Jews; and it indeed proves, that a detestable and delusive method of dealing with matters of

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said

conscience very generally prevailed among their leading sects, which was afterward copied by the teachers of corrupt Christian Churches, and was especially perfected by the order of Jesuits in the Church of Rome. This "deceivableness of unrighteousness" is inseparable from a systematized superstition; and to all such cases the monitory and reproving words of the text may be justly applied. By all persons of this description some of the commandments of God, at least, are violated; and the very principle which leads to that prevents a spiritual and real observance of the others. Such violaters of the law cannot, therefore, "enter the kingdom of heaven," that is, they cannot be saved; for although the rhetorical figure, μειωσις, is used, "shall be called LEAST in the kingdom of heaven," yet the plain import is, that they shall be found so little, so "lightly esteemed," though in their own imagination great saints, so contemptible and base, as to be wholly excluded when Christ "shall come to be our Judge." Still, however, the direct and primary reference of the text is to the Antinomian heresy, those persons being certainly intended, as the scope of the passage shows, who receive Christ under the notion that he came to annul the obligation of the moral law upon his disciples, and TEACH this fatal notion.

Verse 20. *Except your righteousness shall exceed, &c.*—Here the Pharisees are brought in for the sake of illustration. So far are Christ's disciples from being allowed to break any commandment, though accounted *the least*, their righteousness is to exceed even that of the Pharisees, who were the advocates of the perpetual obligation of the law, though on wrong principles, and greatly extended its strictness. It is to exceed or to abound more than theirs in UNIVERSALITY: they violated some of the commands; we are to keep them all. And it is to exceed theirs in depth, having its root in a renewed heart, and controlling the very thoughts: for the Pharisees did not extend the law of God to the thoughts; so that with them evil desires and purposes were not sinful, if they did not express themselves in overt acts, even though this were prevented by mere circumstances, and not by conscience and self denial. Several proofs of this have been collected from their writings; of which Kimshi's comment upon Psalm lxvi, 18, may be given as a pregnant instance. The words of David are, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" that is, says this unblushing interpreter, "He will not impute it to me for sin; for God does not look upon an evil thought as sin, unless it be conceived against God and religion;" meaning, unless it be either blasphemous or idolatrous; for these only were excepted. It was to this lax view of the obligation of the law, no doubt, that our Lord alludes, when he charges the Pharisees with making clean "the outside" of the vessel only.

This part of the discourse, therefore, forms an appropriate introduction to that spiritual exposition of the intent and obligation of the Divine law which follows.

The scribes.—For an account of the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees see note on chap. iii, 7. The *scribes* were either civil or ecclesiastical. The former were keepers of registers, genealogies, and muster rolls, copyists of various writings, and were remarkable for fine writing. They were of various degrees of rank, just as amanuenses, secretaries, and registrars are among us. The scribes, who were employed merely in civil offices, and who used the art of writing as a profession, do not appear to be mentioned in the New Testament. The ecclesiastical scribes are supposed at first to have been chiefly employed as copyers of the law and the other sacred books, on which great pains and care was bestowed. Afterward they became instructers of the people in the written law, and public readers of it. During our Saviour's ministry they were looked up to as the most qualified expounders both of the law and the prophets, and were of great influence and authority among the Jews. "Scribes," "doctors of the law," and "lawyers," were only different names for the same persons. They were public teachers, and had disciples, and were, for the most part, of the sect of the Pharisees. See note on chap. ii, 4.

Ye shall in no case enter, &c.—"In no case," *ου μη*, an emphatic negative, signifying, *not at all, not by any means.* See note on verse 19.

Verse 21. *Ye have heard that it was said.*—Some of our principal commentators think that Christ did not here intend to give a more spiritual and extensive exposition of the law of Moses, but only to correct those false glosses, which, on the authority of their traditions, the scribes and Pharisees had put upon these precepts. But if our Lord had principally referred to such traditions, he would scarcely have used the phrase, "of old time," because, at the farthest, such traditions could only have sprung up subsequently to the close of the order of prophets, who, while they continued, were the inspired and acknowledged expositors of the law. These two views are not, however, in opposition to each other.

* by them of old time, [m] Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

* Or, *to them.*

[m] Exod. xx, 13; Deut. v, 17.

The law was always understood spiritually by spiritual men; and allusions to its office to regulate the whole heart, as well as the conduct, often appear in the Psalms and the writings of the prophets; but, till our Lord entered upon his office as the great Teacher of the law, the import of those of its precepts which forbade certain outward acts, considered as equally prohibitory of the evil principles and affections which tend to produce them, was never so expressly, and with such authority, laid down as the law of heaven. It was the absence of this express manner of stating the import of these commands which gave occasion to those wretched casuists in the Jewish Church, who separated morals from their principles, to adopt and teach such interpretations as quite destroyed the obligations of internal holiness. Our Lord, therefore, at one and the same time, refutes their misleading doctrines, maintains the original spirituality of the decalogue, gives to his explicit exposition of it the force of the original law, by a formal enunciation of its meaning, and branches it out into more particular precepts: so that by this means, as above stated, he *fulfilled* or *completed* it.

By them of old time.—Rather, TO *them of old time*, according to the fathers and the ancient versions; that is, to the Israelites, who received the law from Sinai; ἐρρέθη being always joined to a dative case, Rom. ix, 12; Gal. iii, 16, &c. So also the Greek fathers understood the passage.

Shall be in danger of the judgment.—Liable to the punishment which the law inflicts upon murder. Our Lord joins the prohibition of the crime of murder in the moral law, with its penalty in their juridical law, which also was delivered "to them of old time."

Verse 22. *But I say unto you.*—Here our Lord expressly assumes the character of a lawgiver, not as a delegated servant, but as having an *original inherent authority* to command; "but *I* say," &c. This, surely, is not the style of a mere man, and can only be justified on the ground of his true and proper Divinity, of which, indeed, it is a powerful proof. Thus, though in this discourse, as St. Basil observes, "GOD WITH MAN delivered not his law amidst the terrors of Sinai, the sound of a trumpet, and circling fire; but mildly and gently, as possessing the same nature as those to whom he delivered it;" yet, amidst all this lowliness, the concealed majesty breaks forth; and this *manner* of speaking, so different from that of human teachers, was *felt*, though not yet fully understood by his hearers, who were "astonished at his doctrine;" because *he taught them as one having* AUTHORITY, *and not as the scribes.*

Angry with his brother.—By *brother* our Lord means ANY ONE, any human being. By the term *brother* the Jews understood only an Israelite; and by "a neighbour," a proselyte, in opposition to a Samaritan or a heathen: and as our Lord taught, in the parable of the good Samaritan, that all men were neighbours, so here the very reason and principle of the precept shows that he regarded all men as brethren; thus destroying all those distinctions of a false casuistry among the Jews, to which they resorted, in order to justify their selfishness, bigotry, and malevolence.

Without a cause.—Although εικη is wanting in the Vulgate, and in two Greek MSS.; yet as the Syriac, and also all the other Greek MSS. have it, the majority of critics, following Chrysostom, and all the earliest fathers, both Greek and Latin, retain it. The reason why some have been disposed to reject a word which has so weighty an evidence in its favour, as a part of the pure text, appears to have arisen from refined notions concerning anger. Εικη, rendered by us *without cause*, signifies *lightly*, or *intemperately*, *sine modo*, as Grotius says, as well as *sine causa*. It is, indeed, necessary to the perfection of the precept to comprise both ideas; since persons who are rashly angry are often so without cause, and also often carry it beyond the measure when a real grievance has been sustained. The intention of our Lord was obviously to inculcate self-command, the complete subjection of the passion of anger to REASON and to CHARITY; and he therefore condemns all that excess which violates the rules of each. But the passion itself is not sinful when thus governed. It is then the warm repulsion of whatever is injurious and unworthy, in word or deed, by a pure and honourable mind, but accompanied by no malignity against the offender, and along with which the spirit of forgiveness is maintained. Hence anger is attributed to our Lord; and we are exhorted to be "angry and sin not:" plain proofs that the existence of this passion may consist with the highest moral state of the mind, and that it is not to be destroyed in the Christian, but sanctified.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 [n] Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

[n] St. Luke, chap. xii, 58, 59.

Shall be in danger of the judgment.—That is, shall be guilty of a capital offence, and liable to capital punishment, which the Jewish courts of twenty-three had anciently the power to inflict. *And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,*—vain, worthless fellow, a term of great contempt among the Jews, except when used in solemn religious reproofs, —*shall be in danger of the council;* that is, the sanhedrim, which had the power of inflicting death by stoning, a still more aggravated form of punishment. Whether at this time the power of life and death had been taken away from the great council by the Romans or not, as we know it was at the time of our Lord's condemnation, they had still the power of declaring that by their laws a criminal "ought to die;" so that the allusion still held good. *But whosoever shall say, Thou fool,* a stronger word than raca, and which implied a higher degree of anger, and that of a more malignant character, as importing a charge of moral turpitude, of wicked and reprobate principle, *shall be in danger of hell fire,* the severest punishment of all. *Gehenna,* the word here used by our Saviour, is compounded of two Hebrew words, signifying the valley of Hinnom, which is a part of the valley which bounds Jerusalem, where in ancient idolatrous times children were offered to Moloch, an Ammonite deity, and consumed by fire. The place was therefore called Tophet, which signifies, "a loathsome abomination." To this place, afterward, the refuse and offal of Jerusalem was carried, and consumed by perpetual fires. It is doubtful whether the Jews in our Lord's time punished malefactors by burning; but in some cases this was enjoined by the Mosaic law, and the passage before us makes it probable that this was not then a punishment wholly unknown, though unfrequent.

The intention of our Lord in comparing the degrees of punishment to be inflicted upon sinful anger to the different capital punishments of the Jews, simply putting to death, then death by stoning, and in the third degree by burning, is obvious. He speaks figuratively; for no temporal punishments of the kind he mentions were inflicted upon anger by the Jews, and so his hearers were not obnoxious to them; but he teaches us, that intemperance and malevolent anger is such an offence as excludes men from heaven, and renders them liable to future punishment; and that, according to the degree in which it may be indulged, and the injury it may prompt those who unhappily subject themselves to its influence to inflict upon others, either by exposing them to contempt, or blighting their moral character, or by any other means, it shall be visited with proportionate punishments, even to that which is most extreme. So necessary is it for us to acquire and maintain an entire government over this dangerous element of our nature.

Verse 23. *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift, &c.*—Severe as our Lord's condemnation of sinful anger may appear, he here opens a way of escape from its consequences to those who have been guilty of it. No gifts at the altar are acceptable to God, or available to the worshipper, without penitence and charity. This was first levelled against the formalists of the time, who regarded the mere acts of worship and ceremonial service as in themselves meritorious; but we are to *remember there,* that is, before *the altar,* whether our brother has any thing against us; which supposes a habit of examination into the state of our hearts and our past conduct, when we approach God; and if an honest conscience suggests the charge of any offence against a brother, *leave there thy gift,* thy sacrifice or offering, *before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother;* that is, reconcile thyself to him, as the verb signifies; use every means to render him propitious to thee; and seek his forgiveness by due acknowledgment and reparation of the offence.

Verse 25. *Agree with thine adversary, &c.*—Here our Lord does not introduce a new subject, as some have thought, and exhort debtors to a speedy settlement of their accounts, or the making pecuniary compensation for injuries, which would have been foreign to his purpose; but he enforces the necessity of offering satisfaction to an offended brother: an allusion to the practice of prudent men, who hasten to satisfy the demands of their creditor, or to propitiate accusers, lest they should be exposed to fine, and, in default of that, to arrest and imprisonment. As a creditor or an injured man may hastily enforce the law upon a careless debtor or culprit, so the anger of God may suddenly break forth

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, [o] Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 [p] And if thy right eye * offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, [q] Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

[o] Exod. xx, 14.—[p] Matt. xviii, 8; Mark ix, 47.

* Or, *do cause thee to offend.*—[q] Deut. xxiv, 1.

against him who has injured and offended another, and thus broken the Divine law as interpreted by our Lord, unless he gain his brother by confession and restitution. Be in haste to be at peace with all mankind. The process here described seems best illustrated, not from purely Jewish, but from foreign customs, which, during the reign of Herod the Great, were largely introduced. There is in this, says Hug, a direct view to the Roman law *de injuriis*, according to which the complainant, with his own hand, dragged the accused before the judge, without magisterial summons, *in jus rapit*; yet, according to which, on the road, an agreement, *transactio*, remains open to him; but should not this be accomplished, the MULCT instantly awaits him; which if he does not discharge, he is cast into prison until its liquidation. Αντιδικος, rendered *adversary*, is a plaintiff in a suit at law. *While thou art in the way with him*, signifies, as you are going with him to the magistrate. (See Luke xii, 58.) The *farthing* was two leptahs or mites; the value of the farthing, *quadrans*, a Roman coin, was about three halfpence.

Verse 28. *Whoso looketh upon a woman.*—That the guilt of secret inclinations to sin was concluded from the letter of the law, by the ancient Jews, appears from many passages in the Old Testament, and from the manifest strugglings and prayers of the pious against all "secret sins." The law prohibiting adultery would therefore be understood to prohibit also all impure desires; but it was now explicitly enacted, so to speak, by the great Lawgiver himself, that THE DESIRE OF SIN IS SIN; and that he who indulges that desire comes under the penalty of the law as certainly as he who commits an outward violation of it. It was the more necessary to declare this, because of that delusive casuistry on the subject of moral duties, which had been adopted by the Jewish teachers, before alluded to. Outward acts alone with them were reputed sinful, not thoughts and desires, or even intentions of evil, as before stated. In that respect they fell below the heathen moralists themselves:—

Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,
Facti crimen habet. JUVENAL.

"For he who conceives any secret wickedness within himself has the guilt of the deed." But against all such attempts to weaken the import of the laws of God, whether by the Pharisees or by corrupt and subtle Christian teachers, our Lord erects this impassable barrier. He requires from his disciples such a purity of heart as shall lead them to abstain, not only from all gross acts of impurity, but from the indulgence of irregular thoughts; and thus, by this salutary law, man is guarded against the very first step to pollution. Alexander the Great, when he ordered some of his soldiers to be put to death for adultery, was able to enforce his severity in this respect, with this noble declaration, that, for his own part, he had not suffered himself to see the wife of the conquered Darius, his prisoner, nor so much as to think of seeing her; nor had he permitted her beauty to be the subject of conversation in his presence. Bishop Porteus, on this precept of our Lord, justly remarks, "This is wisdom, this is morality, in its most perfect form; in its essence, and in its first principles. Bad thoughts quickly ripen into bad actions; and if the latter only are forbidden, while the former are left free, all morality will soon be at an end."

Verse 29. *If thy right eye offend thee, &c.* Σκανδαλιζειν, which is usually rendered, in our version, *to offend*, is from σκανδαλον, *a stumbling block*, which being placed in the way causes a person to stumble or to fall. By Suidas it is explained, A TRAP. Whatever, therefore, becomes *an occasion* of our FALLING from a state of purity into sin; whatever would lead us into criminal ENTANGLEMENTS of our consciences and affections, must be resolutely renounced, at the expense of every sacrifice, however painful or costly. Joseph, with respect to Potiphar's wife, is an instance of this kind of sacrifice: he chose to hazard a bad woman's fury and its consequences, and he meekly sustained them in a long imprisonment, rather than desecrate himself by sin. The metaphors of cutting off the right hand and eye, are probably taken from surgery, when a mortified member must be exscinded to save the whole body; and they strongly teach us a rigid, and if necessary, a painful self-denial,

32 But I say unto you, That [r] whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

[r] Luke xvi, 18; 1 Cor. vii, 10.

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, [s] Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[s] Exod. xx, 7; Lev. xix, 12; Deut. v, 11.

in order to escape guilt, and its punishment. See note on Mark ix, 48.

Verse 31. *Whosoever shall put away his wife, &c.*—The Mosaic law of divorce is found in Deuteronomy xxiv, 1: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." On the meaning of this law, the Jewish schools were divided, and the dispute was especially ardent about our Lord's time; the school of Shammai taking the ערוה, rendered by us, *uncleanness*, to signify whoredom; and that of Hillel contending that it meant any defect whatever, either of person or disposition. However this might be decided, divorces had been long frequent among the Jews, and that for trivial causes; and the general interpretation of the law had introduced a laxity far beyond its intention. Here then our Lord, in his capacity of the Lawgiver of his own dispensation, settles this question also; a question of the highest importance to the institution of marriage, which is the source of all the domestic virtues, and the fountain of public morals. He allows the bill of divorce, but restrains it absolutely to cases which directly and essentially violate the marriage covenant. Πορνεια, "fornication," is usually distinguished from adultery; and some difficulties have therefore been raised as to the exact meaning of our Lord. These are, however, removed by considering πορνεια as a generic term signifying criminal sexual intercourse, and which in the case of a married woman necessarily became adultery.

Verse 32. *Causeth her to commit adultery, &c.*—By setting her at liberty to marry another, which was expressly done in the bill of divorce, one of the clauses in the form being, "So as to be free, and at thy own disposal to marry whom thou pleasest, without hinderance from any one," &c.

Verse 33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself, &c.*—Our Lord does not here explain or give an extended sense to the Mosaic law, which prohibits perjury; but he enforces it against a practice of the Jews, which was founded upon distinctions invented to cover deceit and treachery. Our Lord, instead of forbidding oaths to be taken before a magistrate, or on solemn occasions, leaves that as it stands in the decalogue, and in Leviticus xix, 12; for none of the oaths which he prohibits in what follows were by THE NAME of God, which all JUDICIAL oaths were: "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely." He himself, though for a time silent, on his examination before the high priest, answered when ADJURED "by the *living God*;" and sanctioned the oath by taking it upon himself. See the note on the place. What he forbids is false swearing, in any mode: for as the Jews thought that swearing by *heaven*, by the *temple*, or by the *head*, their usual voluntary oaths, were not as binding as when the name of God was invoked, Christ, on the contrary, shows that such oaths came under the Mosaic prohibition of swearing falsely; and that their violation rendered the offender liable to an equal penalty. That this practice, of adjuring creatures and not God, prevailed among the Jews, appears from Philo, who has a passage forbidding men to swear in extra-judicial cases by the Supreme Cause; but, if necessary, directs them to record the earth, the sun, or the heavens. And that they trifled with such oaths, we learn from Maimonides, who says, that "if any man swear by heaven or by earth, yet this is not an oath;" meaning not an oath in the highest sense, such as the law regarded, or the violation of which would come under its rule of swearing falsely. It was not unknown to the heathen that this fallacy was practised among the Jews. A curious illustration of this has frequently been cited from an epigram of Martial:—

Eccè! negas, jurasque mihi per templa tonantis,
Non credo: Jura, verpe, per ANCHIALUM.

"Lo, thou deniest it, and swearest by heaven; but I believe thee not. Swear then by Anchialus," that is, אם חי אלה, *as God liveth*, which, with the Jews, was a binding oath. When, therefore, our Lord says, "Swear not at all," he neither refers to profane swearing by the name of God, which impiety as well as perjury is clearly forbidden by the third commandment; nor does he forbid judicial oaths administered by proper authority, nor adjurations in the name of God, on other solemn occasions, but all such swearing as he immediately specifies; "by heaven," "by the earth," "by Jerusalem," "by the head," and other similar oaths, wherein some creature is adjured. These oaths were often trifled with; and he therefore inhibits them altogether, because they led men into the sin of perjury, under the false casuistry of their

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:
35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.
36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 [t] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.
38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, [u] An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:
39 But I say unto you, [v] That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite

[t] James v, 12.—[u] Exod. xxi, 24; Lev. xxiv, 20; Deut. xix, 21.

[v] Luke vi, 29; Romans xii, 17; 1 Cor. vi, 7.

teachers, who taught that because in them the name of God was not appealed to, their violation did not amount to any great offence. On the contrary, Christ determines that they all, in fact, implied an appeal to God, inasmuch as he could not be separated from the work of his hands. For since they swore by one or other of the objects here mentioned, as imprecating upon themselves misfortune or punishment from it if they swore deceitfully, every appeal to a creature as an avenger of falsehood, independent of God, whose power alone gives energy to the creatures to bless or to hurt, was a manifest folly. "Swear not at all," therefore, is the precept: *neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool:* Isaiah lxvi, 1: *neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King*, who has his temple there: *neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black;* the health or sickness of the human frame being constantly in the hands of God. Thus he teaches, that to swear by any of the creatures is, in fact, to swear by God who made and preserves them; and that the violation of such oaths was as truly an act of perjury as when the name of God was directly appealed to. It is a beautiful observation of Law, in reference to this passage: "How sacred the whole frame of the world is, how all things are to be considered as God's, and referred to him, is fully taught by our Lord in the case of oaths. Here you see all things in the whole order of nature, from the highest heaven to the smallest hair, are always to be considered, not separately as they are in themselves, but as in some relation to God." It is in this way that our Lord makes the Mosaic precept to bear upon the practice of the Jews; but as the frequent use of all oaths, even when rightly conceived to be binding, and freed from the loose casuistry of the Jews, tended to lower their sanctity on the one hand, and to diminish confidence between man and man in the affirmations or denials which ordinary life calls for, our Lord prohibits all these voluntary oaths on common occasions; and thus at once enhances the sanctity of judicial adjurations, and raises an honourable confidence in the common communications of men with each other, which the frequency of these appeals to God or to his creatures had served to diminish. It was a strong and admirable manner of impressing his followers with a constant regard to truth in speech: and therefore he adds, *But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay;* that is, strictly and accurately true both in affirming and denying; the words being repeated to give the precept more strength, according to the manner of the Hebrew; or as the ellipsis to be understood is supplied by St. James, in quoting these words of our Lord, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay;" that is, Let your yea be yea, and not nay; and your nay be nay, and not yea: intend what you say, and act accordingly.

For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.—Εκ του πονηρου, of the evil one.—(See chap. xiii, 19.) That is, this custom of trifling with oaths, and truth, and inventing subtle distinctions to palliate it, is of the devil, the father of lies;—a sentence which also refers the vicious casuistry of the papal Church, in the matter of oaths, to its true origin.

Verse 38. *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, &c.*—As this was one of the judicial laws of the nation, and we have no instance in which our Lord interfered with merely civil matters which implied no moral turpitude, and know that on one or two occasions he expressly declined to interfere, it is not probable that he here repeals this part of the Jewish law, Deut. xix, 21; Exod. xxi, 24; Lev. xxiv, 19. We may, therefore, conclude, that under the shelter of this public law, the disposition to appeal to the magistrate in trifling cases, and also the private retaliation of injuries, had been both practised and justified by the Jews; and thus a litigious and revengeful temper was encouraged, a character which, indeed, they appear always to have borne. What, then, does our Lord teach his disciples? *But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.* Αντισηναι here signifies, to retaliate; for αντι, in composition, imports, *vicem referre*, to repay, or oppose the injury by the same means; and is here used in the same sense as ανταποδιδοναι in Rom. xii, 17, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." The pacific disposition here en-

thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and [w] from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, [x] Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, [y] Love your

[w] Deuteronomy xv, 8.

[x] Lev. xix, 18.—[y] Luke vi, 27.

joined forbids us to be eager to resort to legal process on comparatively trifling occasions, which are exemplified by being smitten *on the cheek*,—which was an act of contumely among the Jews rather than intended to inflict corporal injury,—or being sued at law unjustly for *a coat*, or being compelled to go *a mile*. These are all proverbial expressions, to denote the smaller class of injuries. And the precept, also, forbids all private retaliation of any kind, especially of those injuries which Christians were to sustain for their religion, not only from public functionaries, but from their neighbours and other individuals. It is a principle, too, which may be applied to the smaller circumstances of life, in which neglects, as well as injuries, might place us under a temptation to return "evil for evil;" a thought which ought never to be allowed a place in the breast of a disciple of the meek and patient Saviour.

A question here, however, will arise, whether our Lord forbids us to resort to the protection of the laws of our country on any occasion, even should the consequence be the infliction of a severe penalty upon the offender. To this it may be answered, that as the instances of injustice given by him which we are forbidden to retaliate by even an appeal to law are such as can do but little injury; the impunity of greater cases, such as would affect the interests of society as well as our own, is not included in the prohibition.

Besides, it is a principle laid down in our religion, that magistracy is of God; and that the magistrate "bears not the sword in vain." Still, however, every Christian is, by implication, even in these graver cases, guarded against too eager a disposition to commence legal processes; and ought to be clear in his own mind that he is free from the spirit of revenge, and is acting with a serious regard to the duty he owes to himself and to the public.

On the above verses a few remarks explanatory of the phrases and terms may be added.

The law of restitution, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was not peculiar to the Jews; it obtained among many ancient nations. It was so rigidly enforced at Athens, that if a man put out the eye of a man who had but one eye, the offender was condemned to lose both eyes, as the only exact equivalent. To turn the other cheek to be smitten, is not to be understood literally. Neither did our Lord nor St. Paul act thus when so assaulted. The expression is proverbial for a patient and unrevenging temper. The *coat*, χιτων, was the tunic, or under garment; the *cloak*, ιματιον, was the upper garment, or mantle; a piece of cloth nearly square, and wrapped round the body, or tied over the shoulders. *To compel thee to go a mile*, is also a proverbial expression. The verb αγγαρευειν (from *hangar*, a dagger, which the couriers wore as a mark of authority) is a Persian word, used to denote the impressing of men by state authority, to carry burdens, or messages from stage to stage. This was imposed upon the Jews while under the Persians; and both the Roman governors and the tetrarchs compelled them to similar services, or to furnish horses to their public messengers and posts, and to accompany them. The word came, therefore, to express any oppression or compulsory treatment attempted by any one. The word אנגריא often occurs in the Jewish writings, and is explained by them, the taking of any thing for the service of the king.

Verse 42. *Give to him that asketh, &c.*—These precepts are added to show that the religion of Christ requires positive, as well as negative virtues. It is not enough to be peaceable and forgiving, we must be generous and beneficent. The giving and lending here enjoined are not, however, to be performed without regard to prudence as to our own means, and regard to the character of others. But the circumstances of any case which may come before us are to be considered under the influence of a free and bounteous disposition. The man who never gives or lends to alleviate the wants or difficulties of others, is not a Christian: this is a plain inference from the precept, whatever other comment may be dictated by selfishness.

Verse 43. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*—The first part of this precept is written in the law; the latter part is nowhere *written*, but might probably be inferred from the command to extirpate the Canaanites, and to hold no communion with several of the neighbouring hostile and idolatrous nations. The original necessity of keeping the Jews distinct from foreigners, that they might be uncontaminated with their

enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and [z] pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 [a] For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

[z] Luke xxiii, 34; Acts vii, 60.

[a] Luke vi, 32.

idolatry, and the circumstance of their being made the special instruments of inflicting God's severe judgments upon nations which had "filled up the measure of their iniquity," gave, in the best times, something of an exclusive character to that people. Yet their benevolence was not to be confined to those of their own country merely; nor was the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" so understood. There were "strangers" dwelling among the Israelites, whom the law of Moses commanded them to love and protect; and though the more modern Jews contended that by such "strangers," proselytes were meant, it would seem from the parable of the good Samaritan, which was designed to answer the question, "Who is my neighbour?" that the law, in its original sense, contemplated every man as a neighbour, so as to compassionate and relieve his distresses, without respect to country or religion. As the Jewish teachers had, however, limited the meaning of the law of love as to neighbours, and so far extended the original malediction against the seven nations of Canaan, and the Moabites, Midianites, and Amalekites, as to regard all other idolatrous nations as under the same or a similar exclusion from their kindness, and so justified that hatred of them which they often so contemptuously and haughtily manifested; our Lord tacitly intimates that the original command to hate certain hostile and idolatrous people had been fully accomplished in the punishments anciently inflicted upon them, and was no longer in force; and now expressly declares that, at least under his dispensation, LOVE was to be UNIVERSAL, and all hatreds to be for ever extinguished. Still farther, as that exclusive temper of the Jews, which had so long overstepped its legitimate boundary as to heathen nations, did, in that degenerate age, when religion was no longer placed in the heart, but in outward forms, so frequently break forth into malignity and hatred against those of their own nation who had offended them, so that they were often disposed to treat them as "heathen men and publicans;" he meets this case also in the words before us. What, then, are these Divine precepts of the religion of our Saviour? What sense has he given to the ancient law, as taken up into his dispensation, on these points? 1. He repealed for ever the maledictions of a former age against all that might remain of the devoted nations: and many remnants of these people, as of the Canaanites, Moabites, and others, were still in existence. In that respect "there was to be no more curse," not even on the descendants of Canaan; and his followers were not, like the ancient Jews, to be the instruments of vengeance, but of peace and salvation, to every heathen nation throughout the world. 2. He has fixed the meaning of the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," so as to embrace all men in all the relations in which they may stand to us, however hostile and injurious, that there might be ONE LAW OF LOVE for all nations, and for every individual. "*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them,*" &c. "*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;*" imitators of him, and influenced by his infinite charity, even to the unworthy and unthankful: "*for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust:*" one of the noblest duties enforced by the noblest and most moving of all considerations. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;" he only can righteously exercise it whose perfection is absolute. This belongs not to erring and passionate mortals; none of them must dare to imitate his thunder; but all are to imitate his forgiving and bounteous mercy.

Verse 44. *Bless them that curse you.*—To *bless* here signifies to speak kindly to them, without returning their revilings; and well of them, as far as we can see any thing commendable in them, notwithstanding their faults.

Verse 46. *What reward have ye?*—To every thing by which we please God, Christ promises a *reward*, which disobedience forfeits. Yet it is a reward of grace, not merit. On this subject the remarks of Augustine on Psalm xxxii, are happy: "Let us preserve the most faithful of debtors, because we retain the most merciful promiser; yet we lend nothing to him which can make him our debtor, because we receive every thing from him; for it is of him, in him, and through him. What, then! do we give him nothing, and yet make him our debtor? How is this? Because he is our promiser. We do not say, Lord, restore what thou hast received, but, Render what thou hast promised."

The publicans.—These were the collectors and farmers of the taxes imposed by the Ro-

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

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mans from the time of Pompey; and on this account their very existence being the visible proof of national subjection to a foreign power, as well as from their frequent extortions, they were objects of great aversion among the Jews, and were therefore ranked in the common language with notorious "sinners."—Those actually resident in Judea were Jews: and some, as Matthew and Zaccheus, were men of character. All, however, shared more or less in the common odium. They have their name, τελωναι, from τελος, *tribute*. The taxes of a province were usually farmed by Roman knights; under them were the receivers, called, "chiefs of the publicans;" and those of the lowest degree were the collectors, who paid in the taxes to the receivers, who transmitted them to the farmers-general.

Verse 47. *And if ye salute your brethren only.*—The Jews refused the customary salutations prescribed by the courtesy of the age to Gentiles and Samaritans. On the contrary, we are taught that the benevolence of Christians is to be not only that of the heart, but is to show itself in a careful observance of all the forms of external civility and courtesy.

Verse 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, &c.*—The verb is in the future, but used *Hebraice* for the imperative. For "perfect," St. Luke uses "merciful;" the meaning being the same. It is the Divine perfection of love which we are to imitate, in its PRINCIPLE and in its ACTS. "God," says Augustine, "is perfect in mercy, both in pardoning and in conferring benefits; so be you perfect, both in forgiving wrongs, and in conferring your favours and benefits upon such as need them." The particle, ωσπερ, *even as*, does not here signify *equality* but *resemblance;* an entire conformity to the full extent of our mental and moral capacity. Philo finely observes, "The best wish we can frame, and the very perfection of felicity, is a resemblance to God."

On the expression, "and sendeth rain on the just and unjust," we may observe that, judging from their later writers, it appears to have been a common observation among the Jews, though they probably borrowed it from the New Testament. They observed the FACT; but the grand MORAL which our Lord raises upon it escaped their notice, and was far from their practice. "Greater," says one of them, "is the day of rain than the day of the resurrection of the dead; for the resurrection of the dead is for the just," (and only for the just, according to the notions of some of the rabbins,) "but rain is both for the just and the wicked." R. Jose bar Jacob went to visit R. Joden, of Magdala.—While he was there, rain descended, and he heard his voice saying, "Thousands of thousands, and millions of millions are bound to praise thy name, O our King, for every drop thou causest to descend upon us, because thou renderest good to the wicked."

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ continueth his sermon in the mount, speaking of alms,* 5 *prayer,* 14 *forgiving our brethren,* 16 *fasting,* 19 *where our treasure is to be laid up,* 24 *of serving God, and mammon:* 25 *exhorteth not to be careful for worldly things:* 33 *but to seek God's kingdom.*

1 TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward *of your Father which is in heaven.

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* Or, *with.*

CHAPTER VI. Verse 1. *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men.*—Many MSS. instead of ελεημοσυνη, *alms*, read δικαιοσυνη, *righteousness;* and those who admit this to be the true reading, take the sense to be, a general caution against ostentation in the performance of all acts which constitute the "righteousness" of men; almsgiving being immediately after specified. But eminent critics have successfully defended the received text. And were the reading more doubtful, and δικαιοσυνη established, it would not necessarily alter the sense, as the Hellenists frequently employ δικαιοσυνη, *righteousness*, for almsgiving. The Hebrew צדקה, has also occasionally the same signification.—Almsgiving is here recognized as a duty, and so is made by Christ one of the laws of his religion. It is to be distinguished from the "giving" enjoined in verse 42 of the preceding chapter, as that might, or might not, be performed for the benefit of the dependent poor; and it comprehends every kind of munificence. Alms, properly, are gratuities to the afflicted and destitute of the lowest degree; and as such persons will always be found in every place and state of society, so the duty is universal. It follows, also, from

2 Therefore [a] when thou doest *thine* alms, [*] do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

[a] Rom. xii, 8.

[*] Or, *cause not a trumpet to be sounded.*

the words of our Lord, that almsgiving, when done without ostentation, from a principle of obligation, as matter of duty and kindness to the object, shall not fail to be rewarded.—Often is this realized in the present life, and though such acts of mercy are not meritorious, as some have fatally dreamed, they will not be forgotten in the apportionment of the final rewards of eternity. Our Lord here again calls off the attention of his hearers from those merely external acts which with the Jews were considered to constitute acceptable piety, to the study of their hearts, and the cultivation of those inward principles from which alone a true obedience can flow. Almsgiving is wholly vitiated, as a religious act, when done *to be seen of men*, θεαθηναι, to be gazed at and applauded as on a theatre.

Verse 2. *Do not sound a trumpet before thee.*—Trumpets were used by the Jews to proclaim their new moons, and to collect the people together on various public occasions. A trumpet also belonged to every synagogue. But that this instrument was used to collect people together to receive alms from ostentatious persons, does not appear. Harmer, indeed, quotes from Chardin, that it was the practice of the Persian dervises to sound horns or trumpets in honour of those who bestowed alms upon them; but, in illustrating Scripture by the manners and customs of "the east," we are to recollect that "the east" is a wide term; and, though oriental manners have great similarity in all ages, and have been less subject to fluctuate than those of the west, yet great diversities have obtained there at different times, and in regions far remote from each other. Lightfoot, who is a great authority on all subjects connected with Jewish antiquities, says that he finds no trace of the custom in the writings of the rabbins. The expression used by our Lord may therefore be considered proverbial, as a similar one is with us; and it strikingly marks the ostentatious publicity with which the "hypocrites" whom Christ reproves performed their eleemosynary acts.

Hypocrites.—The Greek word signifies an actor, a stage-player, one who in a *mask* personated a character which he was not: hence, in religion, it is a man of pretended sanctity.

Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.—Those who would take απεχουσι in the classical sense, *to fall short of their reward*, lose the double antithesis intended by our Lord: 1. Between present and future reward; and, 2. Between the kind of reward which they receive from the applause of men, and that which consists in the approbation of God. The obvious meaning is, they have now all the reward they shall ever receive: and this, at the best, is but the empty expression of human praise.

Verse 3. *Thy left hand know.*—A proverbial expression for the closest secrecy. Yet not an *affected* secrecy, which but tells the tale in another manner.

Verse 4. *Thy Father which seeth in secret, &c.*—Εν τω κρυπτω, *place*, is here to be understood, and so εν τῷ φανερω. Otherwise they may be taken adverbially, *secretly* and *openly*. All things are to be done as under the eye of God, which is in every place, and penetrates every heart. Nor shall the modest, retiring manner in which any good is done deprive the disciple of his reward. It is noticed by HIM that seeth in secret; by Him who, thus discerning both the act and the motive, *himself shall reward thee openly*. Here also the antitheses are to be remarked: HIMSELF *shall reward thee:* not a mortal who has nothing to bestow but vain applause; and OPENLY, in opposition to the SECRECY of the giving. This often takes place in the present life, where a favouring providence does, as it were, *openly* mark out the conscientious and humble giver, as a special object of blessing; so that he enjoys through life a sanctified prosperity, according to his rank, and is sometimes raised above it. But the final rewards, to be *openly* administered at the last day, are ultimately, and in the highest sense, intended, according to our Lord's own declaration in his description of the general judgment, chap. xxv, 31, &c. If it be asked whether our Lord proposes a mercenary motive, it may be denied. The alms are not to be given FOR THE SAKE of the promised reward, a motive which would vitiate the act, as being only selfishness directed to another object. The true motives are a sense of duty, and the impulse of those kind feelings toward others which it is an essential branch of our religion to cultivate. In entire consistency with this, however, may the promise of our Lord be brought to bear upon our cheerful readiness to such duties; inasmuch as they assure us that in every act of duty, when accompanied by sacrifice, we are authorized to trust in the care of our

5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not [b] vain

[b] Ecclesiastes, chap. vii, 16.

heavenly Father; and also as they put us to the test, whether we will prefer the spiritual rewards of another life, which God, as an act of pure grace, attaches to the performance of acts of charity, to that dross of earth which we might withhold from the poor, and those carnal gratifications to which we might apply these unhallowed savings.

Verse 5. *And when thou prayest, &c.*—What is usually called private prayer is here intended; a duty recognized as of serious obligation from the most ancient times, and practised with exactness by all good men. It is founded upon the necessity of a personal communion with God, and upon that great privilege which is conferred by religion upon man, that he shall be entitled "to make his requests known unto God" in every thing, however small it may appear to others, which can affect his present interests, and the religious state of his soul. For these exercises, as being of a personal nature, and relating chiefly to personal or family concerns, the privacy of the closet is only fitting; and therefore to offer this species of prayer in the *synagogues*, which were for public worship, by frequenting them at unusual times for this purpose, and in *the corners of streets*, could only result from the hypocritical design of being esteemed eminent for sanctity, which in that age of formal religion appears to have been the high road to vulgar popularity. The practice of the Pharisees, in praying in corners of the streets, squares, &c., may be seen among Hindoos and Mohammedans to this day. They offer their devotions in the most public places, the landing places of rivers, and in the public streets, without any concealment.

They love to pray standing in the synagogues, &c.—Standing was the usual posture of the Jews in prayer, except on particular occasions of calamity and deep humiliation, when they prostrated themselves before the Divine Majesty. In Acts ix, 40, we find Peter *kneeling* down in prayer; in Acts xx, 36, St. Paul prays in the same attitude; and both he himself, and all present with him, in Acts xxi, 5. This, therefore, appears to have been the constant attitude of the first Christians in their acts of devotion; but very quickly after the death of the apostles, the notion came in of giving dramatic effect to religious exercises, innocent in intention perhaps at first, but always culpable in fact, and the fruitful source of future corruptions of the simplicity of primitive worship. Hence at a very early period the Christians uniformly stood at prayer on Sundays; for, according to Tertullian, it was as unlawful to kneel as to fast on that day. The reason is given by Justin: "That on the Lord's day we do not bow the knee, symbolically represents our resurrection in Christ." The practice of standing at prayer was also extended from Easter to pentecost, in testimony of their joy at the resurrection of Christ; and these circumstances came at length to be ranked among the essentials of piety! Many critics, however, take the word εστωτες in the text, simply in the sense of *being;* as the Latin *sto*, and *existo*, are frequently used.

In the synagogues.—Because συναγωγη means a collecting together, whether of things or persons, some here understand εν ταις συναγωγαις, *in circulis*, "in any public concourse," and not in the synagogues, properly so called, the places in which the Jews used to assemble for instruction and prayer; but this would induce a tautology, as "the corners of streets" were selected as being places of public resort. The popular sense of the term is therefore to be preferred.

Verse 6. *But thou when thou prayest, &c.*—The utmost secrecy is here enjoined; the place for private prayer is to be ταμειον, *the closet*, and the door of the closet is to be *shut*. The closet signifies a chamber, or indeed any place of privacy or retirement. It may be the same as the υπερωον, the upper room, which, in many of the Jewish houses, was set apart for retirement, or some still more retired place. The encouragements to this important duty are here most impressively stated. God is in our retirement; he is there to meet us, and receive our prayers; there to bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us: *he seeth in secret;* he enters into our case, and penetrates the meaning of silent desires and sighs, as well as words, which have no need to be vociferously pronounced to enter into his ears; and he *rewards* those *openly* who practise this secret duty in a right spirit. Their strength to do the will of God in the public walks of life, and their power to suffer it amidst all its afflictions; the temper of mind they are enabled to maintain, and the exemplifications of a holy religion, which they are empowered to exhibit, together with a *manifest* resting

repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

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of the Divine blessing upon them; are the OPEN rewards which the mercy of God confers upon those who most regard this injunction: an injunction which ought to be regarded more in the light of a privilege, than as a mere duty.

Verse 7. *Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.*—The verb Βαττολογεω is said to be formed from one Battus, who made long hymns to the gods, full of tautologies, which thus became proverbial to express whatever in spirit or writing was prolix, verbose, and had the same thought repeated in the same or in equivalent words. It is more probably from the Hebrew בטא, to *prate*, to *babble*, It has been much disputed whether our Lord here reproves repetitions in prayer, or long prayers. The fact is, that, simply considered, he forbids neither. All repetitions of the same prayer cannot be reproved, for he himself prayed "*thrice* in the same words;" and many instances of repetition are found in the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament. It would also be an evident restraint upon the strong emotions of the soul in prayer, were the repetition of the same words or sentiments absolutely prohibited. St. Paul, through his earnestness, for instance, was led to pray thrice, that his thorn in the flesh might "depart from him;" and if he used not exactly the same words, the import of his prayer must have been each time the same. Nor are long prayers forbidden, as some have supposed, who think their notion fortified by our Lord teaching his disciples, immediately after this, a short form of prayer: but that this was not designed to regulate the length of our prayers, is evident from longer prayers being used by the apostles themselves, who surely knew the mind of their Master; to say nothing of the extended prayers used by Solomon, at the dedication of the temple; by Daniel in confessing the sins of his people, and praying for their restoration; and by Nehemiah, chap. ix. Simply then, in themselves, neither repetitions in prayer, nor length of prayer is forbidden. Our Lord is his own interpreter; and we have only to take the latter part of the verse to explain the former: "*for they think that they shall be heard for their* MUCH SPEAKING." The fatal error which crept into all corrupted religions was, and continues to be, that God is pleased with *mere service*, of which he requires a certain *quantum*, usually onerous and wearisome to him that offers it, which renders him more meritorious, and God more propitious. Hence the *length* of the prayers of heathens may be accounted for: and long prayers are forbidden when they are made so under this intention. As for their *repetitions*, these partly arose from the necessity they thought themselves under of filling up the appointed time, and making up the required amount of service; and still more directly did they proceed from those low views of their deities which prevailed among them. These were local gods, and might be at a distance; their worshippers must therefore continue calling until they returned: hence Elijah mocks the worshippers of Baal, "Cry aloud; for, peradventure, he may be asleep, or on a journey." They also ascribed human affections to their gods, and entertained notions of overcoming their reluctance by dint of clamorous importunity; or of wearying them into compliance, by reiterations of the same requests; or of making them understand their case by urging it repeatedly under different forms. For this they were often satirized by their own writers. Hence the husband is introduced in Terence, "Cease, wife, to tease and stun the gods with thanks for the welfare of your child. Cannot they understand except you mention it a hundred times?" "*Ohe! jam desine Deos, uxor,*" *&c.* Heaut. v, l. 6.—The priests of Baal called, "O Baal, hear us," from morning until noon; and in one place in Æschylus near one hundred verses are filled with tautologies, *ιω, ιω, φεν, φεν, ε, ε,* as invocations of the gods. Now, both the length and the repetitions of such services proceeded upon unworthy notions both of religious service, and the beings to whom it was addressed: they thought they should be heard for their "much speaking," and had reference to that, not to any wisdom or goodness in the deities addressed. All such repetitions of prayer, when addressed to the true God, as implied that he could be pleased with mere service and forms, or that he needed to be informed of the case by putting it in various modes before him, or that he could be urged by a clamorous importunity to do what he was reluctant to do, or that he was absent, and needed to be called upon by vociferation, implied an affront to him, a bringing him down to the level of heathen deities, and thus proved great ignorance and want of true devotion in his worship. He, therefore says, *Be ye not like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.* As your Father, he is always inclined to hear your prayers; and from his infinite knowledge needs no information. Such views of God ought to regulate the MANNER of our praying: it is to be full and comprehensive, earnest and devotional; it may be lengthened or short-

9 After this manner therefore pray ye; [c] Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

[c] St. Luke, chap. xi, 2.

ened according to circumstances; it may have such repetition as a sincere and enlightened ardour will often dictate; but there must be nothing in it which springs from the notion that we shall be heard for our much speaking, or which looks at the service itself as having any value: the eye of faith and hope must alone be fixed upon the mercy and wisdom and power of God; and having RATIONALLY made our requests known unto God, we must, with cheerful confidence, wait and look for the answer.

The reason why our Lord referred to these *vain* and clamorous services of "the heathen," appears to have been, that he might thereby the more severely reprove the Jews, who had fallen into the same delusion as to the efficacy of mere service with God; and they also made long prayers, and used repetitions, under much the same views as the heathens. Hence the rabbinical maxims given by Buxtorf: "Every one that multiplies prayer shall be heard:" and, "The prayer which is long shall not return empty."

As our Lord's words, *For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him*, are not given as a reason against *much speaking* in prayer, but against thinking we shall be *heard* for our much speaking, they afford no countenance to the argument which is sometimes urged against prayer, from the previous knowledge which God has of our wants. This, indeed, when rightly considered, affords the highest reason, and the best encouragement, to this great duty; and the beautiful light in which the sentiment is here put presents to us another of those instances in which our Lord, in few words, suggests, as the ground of our confidence, the loftiest views of the Divine nature, in opposition to those low and defective conceptions which a religion of mere ceremonies, whether Jewish or pagan, tends always to induce. Every thing is known to God; all the minutest circumstances which can affect an individual; all that that individual, in the infinite variety of relations in which he may and must be placed, can want; all that he really needs, although he may greatly mistake on this matter himself; all that can be truly good to him in its beneficial results, as well as its present influence. He *accurately* knows all these things before we ask; and it is also as certainly implied that he is disposed to give what, upon this infallible knowledge of our characters and the influence which things have upon us, we really *need*. This, then, is one of the reasons and grounds of prayer. God knows what we want before we ask; he is disposed, by the benevolence of his nature, by his parental feeling as our *Father*, to give; and waits only for the simple expression of our desires in prayer, accompanied by that trust which we ought to exercise in his mercy, in order to bestow upon us the best blessings at the best time. The infidel argument against prayer is, therefore, our Lord's argument to enforce the duty; and it is enough for those who receive the revelation of the Bible, that to ask them of God is the instituted means of obtaining our blessings, although the reasons of the appointment should not be fully manifest. He who gives to them that deserve not has the right to appoint his own conditions; and since in this case they are made so easily practicable, nothing can more impressively illustrate his goodness. Those as greatly err, on the other hand, who explain prayer as not influencing God, but ourselves, and thus affect to give a philosophic reason for the duty. Prayer, however, is not in itself the means of producing moral changes in us, but the appointed means of obtaining from God that *grace* by which such changes are wrought; it does not put us into a moral state of fitness to receive his favour, but, as it necessarily implies penitence and faith, it places us in that relation of humble and dependent creatures, that he can meet with us and *graciously* bless us.

Verse 9. *After this manner, therefore, pray ye.*—On the obligation of Christians to use this form of prayer there has been much diversity of judgment; some regarding it as intended merely to be a guide to our own prayers; others, as enjoined upon us to use as a standing form; and a third, as designed only for the use of the disciples until the full revelation of the Christian dispensation, by the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the gift of his Spirit, to lead them into all truth. Those who hold the first opinion take the words *ουτως ουν, thus, therefore, pray ye;* or, as they were understood by our translators, "*After this manner pray ye;*" to signify, Pray ye in similar words, or like mode. But *ουτω*, in various places, signifies a direct form, as in the frequent phrase, introductory to the delivery of a message or prediction: "Thus saith the Lord" is, in the LXX., *ουτω λεγει ο Κυριος*; which can only mean, THESE VERY WORDS saith the Lord. But the matter is more decisively settled by the parallel place, Luke xi, 2, "When ye pray say, Our Father;" and especially when we also consider that this prayer in Luke

was prescribed in consequence of a request from the disciples of Christ, that he would teach them to pray, as John taught his disciples. For as it is certain that it was the practice of the Jewish teachers to give to their disciples a short form of prayer, it is probable that this had been done by John the Baptist, in order to give the desires and hopes of his followers a direction suited to that intermediate dispensation which was designed to usher in the perfect religion of Messiah. The second opinion appears, therefore, to be the best founded; but still, though the use of this form is prescribed to Christians, the practice of the apostles, and the reason of the case, show that other prayers, both of a more extended kind, and comprehending a greater number of particulars arising out of the various wants which we may feel, and the aids we may require, are at once lawful and necessary. Still its important use as a general guide to the structure and spirit of our prayers is to be maintained. "It is the fountain of prayer," says an ancient, "from which we may draw praying thoughts." In this view, the benefit which the Church of Christ has derived from it is incalculable. It teaches us to approach God with filial confidence as our FATHER, but with reverential awe of his sacred NAME; to extend our desires beyond ourselves, and the prosperity of the particular society to which we may belong, to the coming of Christ's universal KINGDOM; it connects absolute submission to the practical will of God respecting us, with our earnestness to obtain the benefits he has to bestow; it teaches our dependence upon his providence for the supply of our DAILY BREAD, and therefore excludes an infidel confidence in mere second causes, and brings devotion into the daily business and enjoyments of life; it calls for confession of sin, and authorizes us to ask FORGIVENESS; and it reminds us that when we pray we are also to FORGIVE; it teaches us that without the aid of God we shall fall into TEMPTATION, and leads us to him as our refuge against the danger of EVIL and the evil one; and, finally, it turns prayer into praise, and calls up the grateful homage and ardent affections of the whole soul toward God, in ascribing to him the glory due unto his name for ever. Into this Divinely prepared mould must all acceptable prayer be cast, and he who regards these as general rules can never, as to the manner of "ordering his cause before God," pray amiss. With respect to the third opinion, it seems chiefly to rest upon the silence of the New Testament as to the use of the Lord's prayer by the apostles or others, and upon the assumption that it is not a prayer offered in the name of Jesus Christ, in which the disciples were instructed to present all their petitions after his resurrection: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name." On which we may observe, that the argument from the silence of the New Testament as to the practice of the apostles proves nothing, since we have no particular account of their modes of worship, and no occasion occurs in the history which could lead to any inference as to the use of this form or otherwise, in their private or social devotions. With respect to the absence of all direct reference to the "*name*" of Christ, which, in fact, signifies his mediation and merit, rather than the express form of concluding our prayers in his name, however important that may be, and by no means to be disused, it may be observed, that we have an instance of a prayer offered even after the ascension, by all the assembled apostles and the Church at Jerusalem, which has no express reference to the mediation and merit of Christ; and we have instances of prayers in the epistles of both kinds, that is to say, of many consecutive petitions sometimes offered without express reference to the offices of Christ, as Mediator and Intercessor, and sometimes with such a reference emphatically declared.—Now it clearly follows, from the latter class of prayers, that "the name" of Christ, in the sense of his merit, was regarded by the apostles as the ground of all acceptable worship, or, as St. Paul says with respect to thanksgiving, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*;" yet from the others it is evident that, though this was always IMPLIED as a first and fundamental principle, it was not always expressed. The absence of direct reference to the mediation of Christ therefore could be no objection to the use of the Lord's prayer by the disciples, after the full developement of the Christian doctrine of Christ's sacrifice and intercession; and by them, as by us, it would be used with constant reference in their minds to the sole ground of their hope. This doctrine, therefore, being understood, it is farther to be remarked, that there is nothing temporary in the character of the petitions which this Divine prayer contains; it is as adapted to convey our general wishes, supplications, and thanksgivings, "to the throne of the heavenly grace," now, as when first enjoined, and will be so to the end of time; nor is it a slight recommendation to its constant use, both in families and public worship, that in it we address God in the very words which were taught us by his beloved Son.

The notion that the several parts of the Lord's prayer were collected out of the Jewish forms of prayer used in the synagogue does not stand on good proof, although great pains have been taken to collect from them similar sentences. The fact is, that there is no satisfactory evidence that the Jewish prayers now

extant are as ancient as the time of Christ. If any have this claim, they are what they call "the eighteen prayers," which are undoubtedly very ancient, and are considered as their most solemn form of worship; but in vain will these prayers be searched for petitions at all similar to those of the Lord's prayer. Not a phrase occurs in them which could suggest a single petition of the Lord's prayer. Others adduced in proof are from liturgies and talmudists of still later times; and it is to be remarked, that with all their enmity to Christ, the Jewish writers have often very freely borrowed moral sentiments, devotional expressions, and even the leading idea of several of the parables found in their writings, from the New Testament. They have thus often confessed its wisdom while they have denied its authority. The strong probability therefore is, that where such coincidences occur as have been pointed out by Lightfoot and others, the rabbins borrowed from our Lord, and not he from them. That our Saviour used in this prayer the devotional language familiar to the Jews, which was drawn from the Holy Scriptures, is certain; as that God is our *Father*, that he is in *heaven*, that his name may be *sanctified*, and his *will* done; and that the *kingdom*, *power*, and *glory* are his; for all these may be paralleled by passages from the Old Testament, which he always took occasion to honour; and with such parallels before the critics referred to, it was little better than solemn trifling to ransack the rabbins, who wrote long after Christ, to find the scattered models of the different parts of this Divine composition. We may therefore conclude, that this form is, as it has been generally acknowledged in the Church to be, an original composition by Christ, into which the sentiments and devotional expressions of the Old Testament are in some parts interwoven, but wholly adapted to his dispensation. The chief use to be made of the later Jewish writers is to explain by them such modes of speaking and such customs, as have been all along peculiar to their nation. That they afford models of sentiment to inspired men is a dream.

Our Father.—The plural form here prescribed indicates that this was a prayer to be used in social rather than in solitary worship. It is a rule with the later Jews, that a man ought always to join himself in prayer with the assembly, not in the singular but in the plural number. As all men are authorized to address God as their Father, not only does this Divine prayer tacitly enjoin upon us a universal philanthropy, but assures us that "God is loving to every man, and that his tender mercies are over all his works." No one, therefore, of the whole human race can "seek his face in vain." This confidence is farther heightened when, through a true faith in Christ, we receive "the adoption of sons;" and, in that special sense spoken of by St. Paul, are entitled to say to God, "Abba, Father." Yet this Father is *in heaven*, εν τοις ουρανοις, to remind us of his glorious majesty, and to impress us with the deepest reverence. He is *in heaven;* and yet, such is his infinite perfection, "the heaven of heavens cannot contain him."

Hallowed be thy name.—The *name* of God is here, as in the Old Testament, put for God himself, as declared by his revealed attributes; and to *hallow* his name, is with reverence and joy to acknowledge all his perfections, and to celebrate his praises; for to *hallow* is equivalent to "glorify." There is an evident allusion to Lev. x, 3, "I will be *sanctified* in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be *glorified;*" and to 2 Samuel vii, 26, "And let thy name be *magnified* for ever."

Verse 10. *Thy kingdom come.*—The kingdom of Messiah, the reign of grace among all nations. That kingdom of which the prophets speak in such lofty strains; the near approach of which John the Baptist announced, and the foundations of which our Lord was then placing in the hearts of his disciples, by teaching that doctrine, and going through those humiliations and sufferings, which were necessary to bring men under its influence; that is, to reconcile them to God, and renew them in righteousness. For the complete establishment of this dominion of God in our own hearts, this prayer may be properly used, although it principally respects the extension of Christ's spiritual reign over the whole earth, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ;" that is, when all the people which compose them, and all their institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be subject to the laws and spirit of his religion. See note on chap. iii, 2.

Thy will, &c.—We do not here pray that God may do his will, nor merely express our acquiescence in what he wills; but that what God wills ourselves and all men to do may be done by us *on earth as it is done in heaven* by the angels; that is, vigorously and with delight, perfectly and with constancy. The model of our obedience is thus the elevated one of the unfallen and unsinning angels, all whose *principles* of obedience ought to exist in us, and be continually carrying up our services to a nearer practical resemblance to theirs. There is here probably an allusion to Psalm ciii, 20, 21: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that *do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.* Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, *that do his pleasure.*"

Verse 11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

—Τον αρτον ημον τον επιουσιον. As the word επιουσιος is found in no Greek writer, nor in the New Testament, except here and the parallel place in St. Luke, there has been great diversity of opinion as to its meaning. It has been derived either from επι and ουσια, *substance* or *being*; or from επειμι, whence comes επιουσα, *following*, *subsequent*, *next*, spoken of a day or night; or from επειμι in the sense of *to be at hand*. But, as Mede says, "the import of the prayer in general is indifferently well agreed upon; but much ado there is what this επιουσιος should signify." Thus we have "bread for to-morrow," that is, a supply day after day; "bread till to-morrow," which also implies daily dependence; and "the bread we have need of to-day," "sufficient bread." The Vulgate has "super-substantial or spiritual bread," which is an unwarranted refinement. "Bread for to-morrow" has an apparent inconsistency with St. Luke's καθ' ημεραν, "day by day," and St. Matthew's σημερον: for to ask that the bread of to-morrow may be given us to-day, or day by day, is not only harsh, but somewhat inconsistent with our Lord's own exhortation: "Take no thought for the morrow, what ye *shall eat*." The derivation from επι and ουσια appears therefore the most satisfactory; for as ουσια signifies *substance*, *being*, επιουσιος may well have the sense of *that which will support existence*, *that which is sufficient and necessary*. The petition will then be, "Give us this day the bread necessary for our subsistence;" as Suidas: το επι τη ουσια ημων αρμοζον, "fit for our support." *Bread*, with the Hebrews, included all the necessaries of life, and with respect to these we are instructed to ask, not what is superfluous, but what is sufficient; a prayer admirably adapted to a religion which inculcates spiritual-mindedness, and teaches us to disregard all earthly things, in comparison of heaven. More than sufficient bread is indeed often given; but then, let it be remembered, it is given as a TRUST. Our Lord appears to have referred to the supply of the Israelites day by day with "bread from heaven," that is, with manna. It is here well remarked by Archbishop Wake, that "we present this petition to God, not to exclude our own reasonable care for our support, much less to exclude our labouring for it; but to show that we depend altogether upon the providence of God, and qwe our lives, and all our support of them, not to our own cunning and industry, but to his blessing, thereby to engage us both to rely on him with the greater confidence, and to make suitable returns of love, praise, and gratitude."

Verse 12. *And forgive us our debts, &c.*—In St. Luke it is "forgive us our *sins*," which fixes the meaning of the term *debts* here used. So in verse 14 of this chapter, *trespasses* is used in explanation of the *debts* of the text. To call sin a debt was a manner of speaking common among the Jews, and derived probably from the Chaldee paraphrasts. Thus Solomon's petition, "Do thou accept their prayer, and forgive their sin," is, in one Targum, "Forgive *their debt*;" and, "Forgive now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin," is, in another, "Forgive the debts of thy brethren." This mode of speaking was not, however, peculiar to the Jews. In the Odyssey, the robbery which the Messenians had committed upon Ulysses, in carrying off his sheep, is called a DEBT. The exchange of terms is founded upon the idea of a contracted OBLIGATION, which is common both to debts and sins.

As we forgive our debtors.—Those who have failed in duty to us, or injured us; without which we ourselves can have no forgiveness from God; although that ALONE will not insure it. Ως here signifies *for*, or *since*; as in St. Luke, "for," γαρ, "we forgive," &c.

Verse 13. *And lead us not into temptation.*—To *lead* is a Hebraism for *to permit*, or *suffer*; suffer us not to be led into temptation; that is, to be OVERCOME by it. Hence Tertullian renders the clause, *Ne nos patiaris induci*. So Augustine explains it: *Quid dicimus nisi, Ne inferri sinas?* And Gregory: *Induci minime permittas*. By temptation is here meant any great and overwhelming trial, whether of our virtue by solicitations and promptings to sin, or of our patience by extreme sufferings. It is such temptation as would produce "*evil*," the evil of sin, according to the next clause, "*but deliver us from* EVIL." To *deliver* here signifies, not to rescue out of evil, but wholly to preserve us from it. Temptations are necessary to a state of discipline, or, as we often express it, a state of probation. We are daily tried, and put to the proof, whether we will obey God, or the suggestions of Satan, the world, and our own evil hearts; but we have here the right granted to us to pray that we may not be permitted to fall into, or by such temptations as shall be "hurtful to the soul." Yet without the special care of God, who could prevent this? Who can so control his circumstances, that they shall never press too hard upon his resolution by presenting motives to some relaxation of duty, or to some positive offence! And what is there in man to withstand the power and

14 For [d] if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves

[d] St. Mark, chap. xi, 15.

subtlety of "the archangel fallen," that malignant spirit, so long practised in every moral wile and subtlety to entangle, pervert, and destroy? How important, then, is this petition, and how great is the encouragement arising from the assurance implied in it, that our heavenly Father will not suffer us to be tempted "above what we are able to bear!" The very prayer implies a promise, since we are authorized by Christ himself to use it.

For thine is the kingdom, &c.—This sublime conclusion is not in St. Luke, which makes it probable that the Lord's prayer as recorded by him, was delivered on another occasion, and in a shorter and somewhat varied form. Here it is a part of a set and solemn discourse, and is therefore given at full length. By some critics the doxology is rejected from the text; but it appears in most of the Greek MSS., the Syriac, and other ancient versions, and was certainly read in the copies used by the Greek fathers; and on such evidence must be retained. It is obviously taken, not as Lightfoot suggests, from the Jews, who at the end of their prayers repeated, "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever;" but manifestly from the inspired words of Solomon: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all," &c, 1 Chron. xxix, 11.

Verse 16. *Be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.*—The word σκυθρωπος signifies one of *a gloomy and dejected countenance*. Lucien, in one of his dialogues, censures those who affected to be philosophers, and without any qualification assumed their garb, and imitated their gravity, calling them apes and stage players, υποκριτες, hypocrites, and ridicules their grave faces, σκυθρωποι, the word here translated, *of a sad countenance*.

Disfigure their faces.—Αφανιζω signifies *to cause to disappear*, and figuratively, to *deform* or *disfigure*, as hiding or defacing whatever is beautiful or graceful. These hypocrites "disfigured their faces" by letting their hair and beard remain untrimmed, by not practising the usual ablutions and anointings, and perhaps also by sprinkling ashes upon their heads. Hence, on the contrary, our Lord exhorts his disciples, when they fast, to *anoint their head and wash their face*, that they might not *appear to men to fast*, that there should be among them no unnecessary exhibition, no vain show of religion. Anointing the body with fragrant oil after washing was a common practice with the ancients, and especially on great and joyous occasions. Examples appear in Homer and other ancient writers. The Jewish canons forbid washing and anointing on fast days. The anointing of the head is mentioned, either because on ordinary occasions they anointed the head only, or because when they anointed the whole body, the rule was to anoint the head first, as being "THE KING over all its members." Which mode of speaking probably gave rise to St. Paul's comparison of believers to the members of the body, and Christ to its HEAD, as being THE LORD of his Church.

Verse 19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, &c.*—The treasures laid up by the easterns were not only gold, silver, and precious stones, but corn, wine, and oil; and garments also, frequent changes of which they thought a point of dignity. Many of these garments were costly, from their curious texture, workmanship, and the embroidery with which they were adorned. In Homer, such vestments make a conspicuous figure in the treasury of Ulysses.

Where moth and rust doth corrupt, &c.—The *moth* eats into the garments; the *rust*, βρωσις, is a name which comprehends the different kinds of insects which devour grain and fruits. The word is from βρωσκω, to eat, and signifies whatever consumes by corrosion, or devouring, whether the mildew, which destroys corn, or the rust, which corrodes metals, or locusts, ants, weevils, and other insects, by which various substances are devoured. Finally, *thieves break through and steal* the gold and silver, as being easily carried away. Thus the perishableness and uncertainty of all earthly property is metaphorically but strikingly set forth; and, as Bishop Hopkins well observes, "the *moth* and *rust* may denote the insensible wasting of the good things of this life, as the moth

treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 [e] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 [f] The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 ¶ [g] No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and

[e] Luke xii, 33; 1 Tim. vi, 19.

[f] Luke xi, 34.—[g] Luke xvi, 13.

does not make a sudden rent; and the *thieves* may intimate some sudden blast of providence upon worldly possessions." The accumulation of property is not here absolutely forbidden. In most cases the business of life cannot be carried on without it, in some degree; and large commercial and manufacturing concerns can only be conducted by a large capital, and if successfully managed must rapidly increase wealth. But the precept forbids, 1. The hoarding up of useless wealth which is not made beneficial to society. 2. All anxiety to acquire wealth, so that we may be cheerfully content with the portion which Providence assigns us. 3. All greediness of gain, whether to keep or to spend, whether to gratify the mean passion of avarice, or to be used for vain ostentation or personal indulgence.

Verse 20. *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, &c.*—Secure imperishable treasures there, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away." It is only by a true faith in Christ that we become "heirs" of this heavenly inheritance; but every act of pious charity lays up treasure in it, and will render it the more rich and felicitous. (See 1 Tim. vi, 17, 18; Luke xviii, 22.) The antitheses contained in these verses will not pass unnoticed by the attentive reader. Treasures on *earth*, and treasures in *heaven;* the latter, therefore, are all spiritual, suited to the enjoyment and capacity of a perfectly purified and glorified nature; they are also *inalienable* and *imperishable*, in contrast with the *corruptible* and *uncertain* enjoyments of time, and so it is a joyful consideration that in proportion to the VALUE of the treasures of heaven is their SECURITY; we can never outlive them, never forfeit them, they shall never be taken away from us.

Verse 21. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*—If we esteem earthly things to be our treasure, then will our AFFECTIONS be set upon them, and become alienated from God, the result of which must be the utter loss of the heavenly inheritance; "for to be carnally minded is death." But if, on the contrary, we have our treasure in heaven, if we gain a true title to it, and esteem the attaining of it the great end of life; if we are intent upon exalting our felicity there, by "works of faith and labours of love," by a vigorous zeal and a liberal charity, our *hearts* will be kept there, and our "AFFECTIONS set on things above." Thus shall we acquire that heavenly mindedness, without which all pretensions to piety are vain and fatally delusive.

Verses 22, 23. *The light of the body is the eye, &c.*—"The light," ὁ λυχνος, *the lamp* of the body is the eye, its steps and motions being directed by it, as in the night we use a lamp for the same purposes. *If therefore thine eye be single*, that is, SOUND, in a healthy state, if vision be perfect; (for, as Campbell well remarks, that "there can be no reference to the primitive meaning of απλους, *simple* or *single*, is evident from its being contrasted with πονηρος, *evil* or *distempered*, and not to διπλους;") *thy whole body shall be full of light;* the images of things without being transmitted by a sound eye to the sensorium, all things appear enlightened, and we are able correctly to perceive and judge of them, and to conduct ourselves accordingly. *But if thine eye be evil*, πονηρος, *diseased*, so that the function of vision cannot be performed, *thy whole body shall be full of darkness;* all notices of external things designed to be transmitted by the eye being shut out, and all the beautiful scenes of nature excluded. *If therefore the light that is in thee become darkness;* if the power of seeing be lost to any one, *how great is that darkness*, how pitiable and wretched is that man's condition!

But how are these words connected with our Lord's argument against worldly mindedness? By the single eye, the liberal person, say some, is intended; by the evil eye, the covetous, urging, as Lightfoot, Whitby, and others, the Jewish phrases, "giving with a good eye," that is, freely; and having "an evil eye," that is, being churlish and covetous. But no good sense can be made of the whole passage in this view. How is it that if the eye be sound or good, in the sense of being liberal, the whole man is full of *light?* or if it be evil, greedy, and covetous, that he should be full of darkness? The attempts to explain this, by the commentators who take the terms in this sense, are too forced

love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, [h] Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for

[h] Luke xii, 12; Psalm lv, 22; 1 Peter v, 7.

and awkward to be admitted; whereas, if we interpret the eye, as an easy and indeed common metaphor to indicate the understanding or practical judgment, a natural and most important sense unfolds itself, which by none has been better expressed than by Baxter: "If therefore thy judgment be sound, and thou knowest the difference between laying up a treasure in heaven and on earth, it will rightly guide the actions of thy heart and life; but if thy judgment be blinded in this great affair, it will misguide thy affections, thy choice, and the whole tenor of thy life. If that judgment then be blind, which in this affair of everlasting moment ought to guide thee aright, what a miserable wretch wilt thou be, and how fatal will that error prove!"

Verse 24. *No man can serve two masters, &c.*—Decision, strong and constant, is here enforced by Christ upon his disciples, by an illustration, the energy of which all must feel. It is taken from the state of absolute servitude; but the *masters* or lords who claim our subjection are of entirely opposite characters, and require an entirely opposite service, and that at the same time, and through the whole course of our life. To obey two lords under such circumstances is manifestly impossible. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon;* yet you must serve one or the other, so that there is no middle path; therefore, take your choice. Mammon is not here used, as some have supposed, for a Syrian idol, like the Plutus of the Greeks, the god of riches; but simply means riches, which our Lord personifies. The word for riches in the Syriac, according to Jerome, was mammon; and so had been introduced into the language of Palestine, which was a mixed dialect.—Thus our Lord again uses it for riches, Luke xvi, 9–13. The meaning is obvious. He who serves riches, that is to say, gives himself up to the sordid love of them, and surrenders himself to be mastered by this passion, cannot serve God. For to serve God acceptably is to serve him absolutely, to confide in him alone, to love him supremely, and to submit to all those laws of generous liberality in the use of money which necessarily imply that we make riches our SERVANTS, not our MASTERS; and are to be ready to sacrifice wealth and all the distinctions and pleasures which it can purchase, when called to it for Christ's sake, and the preservation of a good conscience. Even heathen writers had often just views on this subject. Thus Plato, in his Republic, says, that in proportion to the degree in which riches are honoured and admired, virtue will be slighted and disregarded; and compares them to the light and heavy weight in a balance always going in an opposite direction.

Verse 25. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought, &c.*—The beautiful discourse on God's providential care which is thus introduced was evidently designed to anticipate an objection to the doctrine just taught. The hearers of our Lord would naturally ask, If we are to become so dead to the pursuit of wealth, how are our wants in life to be provided for? To which his reply, in sum, is, Not by surrendering yourselves to an excessive anxiety about the affairs of this present life, but by trusting in the care of your heavenly Father. The word *μεριμνᾶτε* is somewhat unhappily rendered, *take no thought;* for simple thoughtfulness, and a moderated care, are both necessary to that prudent and industrious conduct by which, under God's blessing, our daily wants are appointed to be supplied. "Be not *anxiously solicitous*," better expresses the idea; hence the Vulgate, *Ne soliciti sitis.* Care becomes a dangerous and sinful anxiety when it goes beyond the necessity of the case; when it is disproportionate to the temporary interests of the present life; when it leads to distrust in God; when it arises from want of submission to the lot he may be pleased to assign us; when it stretches too far into the future; when it disturbs and chafes our own minds, unfitting us for devotional exercises, and inducing the neglect of our spiritual concerns.

Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?—Is not the life more, (*πλειον* is here taken in the sense of worth and dignity,) of more value *than meat;* and it follows, therefore, that God, who has given *life*, the nobler gift, will take care to sustain it with food; and he who has so curiously formed *the body*, so that it is a wonderful monument of his power and skill, will not deny to it the raiment which it needs to cherish and defend it. This fine argument proceeds upon the principle that "all the works of God are perfect;" that in them every thing answers to each other, so that nothing is left unprovided for. The wisdom of God which had an end in giving life to every one, which yet is a dependent life, not to be sustained but by external supplies, will so order it that such supplies shall not be

they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field,

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wanting; and he who gave to the body no natural clothing, and yet places it in circumstances which render clothing necessary for decency and comfort, will take care that we are supplied with raiment. When our first parents, from the sad changes which had been induced by sin in their persons and the climate of the world, needed raiment, the Lord God himself made coats of skins and clothed them; an affecting proof of his compassion. In illustration of this sentiment, that he who made the creatures cannot be inattentive to the supply of their wants, Christ refers to the fowls of the air, and the flowers of the field.

Verse 26. *Behold the fowls of the air, &c.* —Εμβλεψατε, *Attentively consider the fowls of the air;* not those, says one, of the barn door, of which man takes care for his own profit, but those of the air. Yet even these, for whom none cares but God, find their food provided by a hand they cannot recognize; so that he who hath given them life, and assigned them their place in the rank of created beings, and appointed their uses, fails not to supply them with subsistence. The fowls here are only considered as the representatives of all the inferior creatures, of the different orders of which the psalmist says, "All these wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season;" and so accurately is this furnished, that none of their species perish for want of sustenance, but continue, from age to age, a standing monument of the care of God. *Are ye not much better than they?* as being spiritual, rational, immortal, and redeemed creatures.

Verse 27. *Which of you by taking thought, &c.*—As though he had said, Let the regular feeding of the inferior creatures, who are without care themselves, reprove your overcarefulness, the total inefficacy of which, independent of the gracious interposition of God, may be confirmed to you by this,—that no man, by *taking thought*, by becoming ever so anxious, *can add one cubit to his stature*, so limited is the power of man. Ηλικια may either be taken in the sense of STATURE or AGE. The latter, to many, seems preferable, as best agreeing with the argument. In the sense of *life*, the connection, they think, is much more apparent. Our Lord warns his hearers against being solicitous concerning their LIFE, how it was to be sustained; and urges that by taking thought they could not prolong it. To add a cubit to life, it is true, is a singular phrase; but they think it only parallel to those passages in the Old Testament where the life of man is frequently compared to measures of length, as "a handbreadth, or span." Farther, they argue that this interpretation of ηλικια is confirmed by St. Luke; for in the parallel passage he adds, "If ye then be not able to do that thing WHICH IS LEAST, why take ye thought for the rest?" And they argue that making a small addition to the length of human life may well be said to be one of the *least things;* whereas, applied to a man's stature, the addition of a cubit is a VERY GREAT matter. This view, though supported by very great names, is far from being satisfactory; for the argument from these words of St. Luke appears strongly to bear the contrary way. The adding of "a cubit," not merely "a handbreadth" or "a span," and therefore not an inconsiderable space, to human life, is not one of "THE LEAST" things; great, and even eternal consequences might depend upon adding even the shortest space to the duration of man's state of trial; but though a whole cubit were added to his stature, it would be a thing of inconsiderable value, or of no value at all, and may therefore be justly called "that which is least." I take the expression to be proverbial, and that the argument against anxiety is thus founded upon man's imbecility: if, by the most careful solicitude, he cannot add a cubit, or any other measure to his stature, God himself giving to every man his bodily form as it pleases him; if he cannot accomplish that which in its import is of as little consequence as whether a man be a cubit higher or lower, much less can he by taking thought so control the arrangements of Providence, vast and intricate as they are, as to command the supply of his wants, and the gratification of his wishes. To which may be added that ηλικια occurs several times in the New Testament, in the sense of *stature;* and is so used by Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucian, and other Greek writers.

Verse 28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, &c.* —This noble flower, which with us is found only in gardens, grows in the fields of Palestine, and especially in the valleys. The white lily, however, is not meant. This is not known in Palestine; but the country, in autumn, is covered with the *amaryllis lutea*, or autumnal narcissus. On this passage that distinguished botanist, Sir J. E. Smith, observes, "It is natural to presume that the Divine Teacher, according to his usual custom, called the attention of his hearers to some object at hand; and as the fields of the Levant are overrun with the *amaryllis lutea*, whose golden lilaceous flowers afford one of

how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

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the most brilliant and gorgeous objects in nature, the expression of 'Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like one of these,' is peculiarly appropriate."

How they grow.—Palairet places a full stop after *αγρον*, and reads what follows interrogatively. *Regard the lilies of the field. How do they grow?* That is, how do they grow up into grace and beauty? *They toil not*, to cultivate the earth which nourishes them; *neither do they spin*, to array themselves with their splendid vestments; but they are arrayed in their beauty by the hand of God.

Solomon in all his glory, &c.—In his royal robes, richly embroidered and adorned. So inferior is every work of art to the beauty, delicacy, and splendour, which are exhibited by the various flowers of the field!

Verse 30. *The grass of the field.*—Χορτος, by us rendered "grass," includes every species of plant which has not a perennial stalk like trees and shrubs.

Into the oven.—The scarcity of fuel in most parts of Palestine obliged the inhabitants to use every kind of combustible matter to heat the ovens which were attached to every family, and used daily for the baking of their bread. The withered stalks of every species of herbage, and the tendrils of vines, were collected for this purpose, and in a climate so hot might be cut down one day and be sufficiently dried by the sun to be used for fuel the next. The argument here is the same as before; but the illustration is beautifully varied. *If God* so *clothe* the plants of the field, invest them with a dress of so much richness and beauty, although they may only exist *to-day, and to-morrow* be used as fuel, *shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

Verse 32. *After these things do the Gentiles seek.*—Heathens who have no knowledge of the true God and providence, *seek*, *επιζητει*, these things SOLELY and ANXIOUSLY, for *επι* is here intensive. Beware, therefore, as though our Lord had said, of the Gentile spirit: such earthly mindedness as theirs becomes not the followers of a religion which discloses all spiritual blessings, and the lofty hopes of eternity itself, to the view of faith; and those cares which distract heathens are most unworthy of men to whom God is revealed as a "Father," and who have his own warrant to trust with entire confidence in his unbounded goodness. It was a severe reproof to the worldliness of the Jews thus to parallel them with the very Gentiles they despised as having no knowledge of God; and the reproach is more poignant in the case of those Christians who, with their still superior light, and in possession of the perfected dispensation of mercy, suffer themselves to doubt the love of God, so gloriously attested by the gift of his Son, and sink into a vortex of earthly anxieties. When we are absorbed in the inquiries, *What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?* we divest ourselves of the Christian, and put on the Gentile character.

Your heavenly Father knoweth, &c.—See note on chap. vi, 8.

Verse 33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—The kingdom of God* is the same as the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom which Christ establishes in the hearts of men by his Spirit; and *his righteousness* is the forgiveness of sin, and the sanctification of the heart and life, in which true righteousness, relative and personal, consists. This is here called *the righteousness of God*, that which he bestows upon and works in them that truly believe the Gospel, in opposition to "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," which stood only in forms. To seek this *first*, that is, first IN ORDER, to give it the foremost place in our desires and pursuits, and first IN DEGREE, to prefer it to all other things, is the condition on which these promises of the SPECIAL care of our heavenly Father is suspended; for though there is a general care in God for man, as his offspring, and the subjects of his redeeming mercy, yet that particular and more tender and watchful care here spoken of is restrained to those who receive his kingdom, and seek his righteousness. To them *all these things shall be added*, meat, drink, clothing, and whatever is necessary, according to their rank in life; and often so as to raise them above that meaner state in which the grace of God finds them. The promises of God never

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

fail when the conditions on which they are made to depend are perseveringly performed. Seasons of suffering, arising out of persecution "for righteousness' sake," are from their nature exempt cases.

Verse 34. *For the morrow.*—A Hebraism for THE FUTURE.

For the morrow shall take thought, &c.—"The morrow" is here, by a fine prosopopœia, considered as a PERSON sufficiently thoughtful and careful for his own affairs, and needing no obtrusive offer of aid from another. Let every day bear its own cares, and discharge its own duties. *Sufficient for the day*, each day, *is the evil*, the trouble and vexation, *thereof*.

Who after reading this part of our Lord's sermon can doubt whether the Scripture teaches the doctrine of a PARTICULAR providence? That which the philosophy of the world so often stumbles at, God's attention to minute and individual things and persons, is here most fully declared. He provides for the fowls of the heaven, that is, for *every one* of them; he paints *every* flower of the field; he regards *each* individual of his human family in particular; marks who among them "seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and deals with HIM accordingly. The government of God over individuals, as such, cannot be more strongly marked.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Christ endeth his sermon on the mount, reproveth rash judgment, 6 forbiddeth to cast holy things to dogs, 7 exhorteth to prayer, 13 to enter in at the strait gate, 15 to beware of false prophets, 21 not to be hearers, but doers of the word: 24 like houses builded on a rock, 26 and not on the sand.

1 JUDGE [a] not, that ye be not judged.
2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: [b] and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
3 [c] And why beholdest thou the mote

[a] Luke vi, 37; Rom. ii, 1. [b] Mark iv, 24; Luke vi, 38.—[c] Luke vi, 41.

CHAPTER VII. Verse 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*—This is not to be understood of forensic judgment; nor of those unfavourable opinions which, from the clear evidence of their conduct, we may, without any breach of charity, coolly and with regret, form of wicked and perverse persons; but of rash, censorious, and malignant judging, which interprets every thing in the most severe manner, and leaves unregarded every palliating or exculpatory consideration. The punishment of this vice is, that we provoke a similar treatment of ourselves from others; and this indeed is an aggravation of the evil, for the harmony and confidence of society are thereby impaired, and the evil passions are continually fanned into a flame. The words look also to the retributive judgments of God; for from him as well as from men, *with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged*, a thought which, were it always present with us, would make us more careful to avoid evil surmisings and severe sentences. Nor ought we to forget how little, at the best, we know of the secret workings of men's hearts, and of the circumstances in which they are placed. It is wisely said by a Jewish rabbi, "Do not judge thy neighbour until thou comest into his place."

And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.—Probably a proverbial sentence. Hence the later Jews say, "Measure against measure."

Verse 3. *The mote that is in thy brother's eye.*—The word καρφος signifies any small dry thing, as chaff, a twig, &c., and has not inaptly been rendered *splinter*, in opposition to *the beam*, δοκος, *that is in thine own eye*. The expression is strongly hyperbolical, which consideration makes all conjectural interpretations unnecessary. Campbell, without any sufficient ground, renders δοκος *a thorn*, because it is impossible to conceive of a *beam* in the eye. But the antithesis is also thereby lost; the intention being to reprove that disposition which is keen to discover small faults in others, and to look over those in ourselves which are as much greater as a *beam* is larger than a *splinter*. Either this was a proverb at that time among the Jews, or they have borrowed it from the New Testament; for it occasionally occurs in their writings, and precisely in the sense of our Lord. So in the Talmud: "In the generation that judged the judges, one said to an-

that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 ¶ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

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other, 'Cast out the mote out of thine eye:' to whom it was replied, 'Cast out the beam from thine eye.'" Doddridge's conjecture, that these terms may be used for disorders in the eyes has nothing to support it.

Heathen moralists and poets have sentiments similar to that of the text; as,—

Qui alterum incuset probri, eum ipsum se intueri oportet.
PLAUTUS.

"Let him who censures first inspect himself."

But much more comprehensive are the Divine words of the Teacher sent from God: "First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou SEE CLEARLY to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye." Freedom from vice is necessary to true spiritual discernment: it is not enough that we should see clearly that the mote is IN the eye of our brother; we must SEE CLEARLY how to cast it out, and that without injury, without offence, and in tenderness and charity. And who can perform so great an office but he that walks with God, and learns of him? Heathen wisdom did not rise to this.

Verse 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither, &c.—Dogs* were by the law unclean animals. Even "the price of a dog" was not to be brought into the house of the Lord for a vow. Things profane and unclean, and flesh torn by such beasts as were forbidden to man to eat, were given to the dogs; but no part of the sacrifices, or holy oblations, not even their fragments. *Swine* are here mentioned not so much with reference to their being by the law unclean animals, as because of their grovelling nature. Both these appear also to have been proverbial expressions among the Jews; the wisdom of which, as in the case of all proverbs, lies, however, in the application; and as a true proverb embodies some useful general truth, which, by a wrong use, may be as injurious as an error, so the right application gives to it all its value; and he that teaches this teaches true wisdom. Our Lord might have uttered new proverbs but to show the use of such as were common, and often much misapplied; of which we have several examples in his discourses, quite as important, and in some respects more so. It was not only teaching truth, but counteracting error. These words are not to be understood as a caution against the free and universal publication of the Gospel. This is enjoined to be preached to "every creature;" consequently, to many who are truly represented, as to their character, by "dogs" and "swine;" and must often be done, although the swine may trample under foot the "goodly pearls," and "the dogs turn and rend" the zealous teacher. In this publicity of its doctrines the contrast between paganism and Christianity is strongly marked. The wise men among the heathen had an esoteric doctrine which they kept from the common people, who were haughtily styled *the profane*, and were not allowed to partake their mysteries; and a similar contempt of the mass of mankind was exhibited by the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, in imitation of heathen priests and sages, had also their "hidden wisdom," which they taught only to select disciples. It was one of the enigmatical sayings of Pythagoras, that you are "not to carry the pictures of the gods in a ring;" that is, you are not to expose the sacred and venerable principles of religion to every vulgar eye. But Christ sufficiently guards against such an interpretation of his words, both by his practice,—for he "preached the Gospel of the kingdom in all the synagogues," consequently to all ranks of people,—and also by his having in the same discourse made it the duty of his disciples to "let their light shine before men." To all, therefore, the great doctrines of his religion were to be declared generally, and to every sincere inquirer its deepest and most spiritual sense was to be opened without exception. But as to the unclean and brutal, to scoffers and blasphemers, to men of perverse minds, who lie in wait to ridicule or blaspheme truth, and to turn into contempt those who hold and teach it, or to expose them to persecution, a wise discrimination and a cautious prudence are recommended. They were so to teach Christ's doctrine, that the holy name of God might not be blasphemed, nor were they needlessly to run into danger. And so now, before the high spiritualities and "the deep things of God," as they are hidden under the general doctrines of Christianity, are fully opened, the Christian teacher must know whom he is addressing; or just in proportion as any thing is sacred, it may be trampled contemptuously or blasphemously under foot. There is a manifest difference between St. Paul's sermon to the Athenians, on Mars' Hill, and his epistles to the Greek Churches; a circumstance which may illustrate our Lord's meaning. And as a preacher must consider the

7 ¶ [d] Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

[d] St. Matthew, chap. xxi, 22.

character of his congregation, so the conversation of Christians on religious subjects, in order to be "good to the use of edifying," must have respect to TIMES, CIRCUMSTANCES, and CHARACTERS.

Some would transpose this verse, and read, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, lest they turn and rend you; and cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet." But the construction of the text is resolvable into what is called *επανοδος, a going back*, and is very frequent in the poetical parts of the Old Testament, and occasionally seen in the prose of the New. Thus we have in Matt. xii, 22, "The blind and the dumb both spake and saw;" rather than, "The blind and the dumb both saw and spake." And an English poet furnishes an example in few words: "The soldier's, courtier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;" where eye, tongue, sword, must be referred back to the scholar, courtier, and soldier, as the sense directs. So here, "Lest they trample them under their feet," refers to the swine; and, "Lest they turn and rend" or tear "you," must be connected with the dogs in the first member of the sentence; but the turning and rending may be attributed to the swine, as well as the trampling under foot. Wild swine, at least, are ferocious, and *turning* well expresses their mode of attack.

Verse 7. *Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.*—We have here a short but most important discourse on prayer; not philosophically argued, not entering into the reasons of the duty, or the advantage, but authoritative and persuasive, and founded upon those affecting views of the love and condescension of God which give so great a charm to the words of Christ in this Divine sermon. *Ask, seek, knock*, all expressive of the same act. This is our duty; God requires this as an acknowledgment of our dependence, and as the expression of our faith; but ask with entire and unlimited confidence, *for* EVERY ONE *that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, &c.*—There is no respect of persons with God. *Ask*, as painfully sensible of your wants; *seek* with diligence, as those who would recover some great thing lost; and *knock* at the door of the appointed refuge, that you may obtain admission, and be safe from all danger. Words of inimitable simplicity, but of weightiest import! They forcibly describe the nature of true prayer, asking until the supply is given; seeking until the good sought for is found; knocking with persevering earnestness until admission is granted. Here is no resting in means as the END, which is the essence of formality, and one of the most fatal and general religious delusions; but a persevering use of prayer, till prayer be answered. A firm ground for the most assured confidence is here also laid; and whoever rightly understands these words knows the way to God, to salvation, to heaven. And here let it be remembered that the teacher is the promiser; and he who promises is the Being who "cannot lie," and who is able to give "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Nor is there any thing exclusive in the promise: it is the word of mercy and eternal truth to all, without respect of persons. "Even the poor man's prayer," says one, "pierceth the clouds; and weak and contemptible as he seems, he can draw down the host of heaven, and arm the Almighty in his defence, so long as he can but utter his wants, or turn the thoughts of his heart to God." But, since it is so manifestly the main intent of this discourse to turn the desires of men wholly into the channel of spiritual things, these ABSOLUTE promises must be understood chiefly as intended to give us full assurance of the success of our prayers for spiritual blessings. These can never be denied; and they are bestowed according to the proportion of our faith. As to external good, also, whatever is really beneficial for those who put a filial confidence in God's mercy shall be infallibly bestowed; and nothing withheld but for some reason which respects our real interests upon the whole. This is the clear doctrine of Scripture; and when fully received, it becomes the source, not only of content, but of thankfulness, in every lot. For as to blessings of a temporal kind, we cannot tell what, in all its bearings and issues, is good for us; and we are therefore to ask them with submission. Still "all our requests are to be made known unto God;" and the reward of prayer, even as to matters which affect us in relation to the present life, is a frequent and sometimes a signal interposition of God.

Verse 9. *Or what man is there of you, &c.*—Ἢ τις εστιν. The particle η answers here to the Latin *an: η τις.* "Is there any of you?" *Ανθρωπος, man*, is emphatic; but not as some take it, that the stress is laid upon the excellence of human nature in respect of its natural affections; but emphatic in the way of contrast with God. The sense is, "Is there any of you, *although* a man," and

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things * whatsoever

* St. Luke, chap. vi, 31.

therefore subject to selfishness and morosity, answering to the 11th verse, "If ye then, *being evil*," &c. Still, evil as you are, it would be a rare thing to find any one among even the worst who would deny the requests of his children for things necessary to their sustenance and comfort.

Verse 10. *If he ask a fish, will, &c.*—Bread and fish are mentioned because they were the common food of the people in that part of Galilee, bordering on the lake. By a fish Bishop Pearce understands an *eel*, to which the serpent would bear some resemblance; but these are proverbial expressions, not to be interpreted too strictly.

Verse 11. *If ye then, being evil, &c.*—The argument is, "If ye, being EVIL, know how to give," i. e., are *accustomed* to give, "good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father," who is essentially and infinitely GOOD, and subject to no evil passions whatever, "give good things to them that ask him!" (See Luke xi, 13.)

Verse 12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would, &c.*—These words, which form a distinct subject, are not connected with what precedes. The *ουν, therefore*, may be considered as an expletive, or it marks a transition. Sometimes, indeed, it indicates a return to a subject which has been for some time suspended by a digression. Hence it may be taken as a continuation of verses 1 and 2; a general rule, growing out of the injunction of the particular caution against rash and uncharitable judging. This rule has justly been called a golden rule, and something resembling it is found in several Greek and Roman, and also in Jewish writers. Christ did not teach a new morality; but explained more perfectly that which, in its principles and particulars, was from the beginning, and placed it on its true foundation, from which it had been so generally removed. This very rule must necessarily have been as ancient as the first revelations of God to man; being necessarily included in the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and is, in fact, the foundation of all social morals. With the religion of the patriarchs it passed with other great principles into the different ancient nations; but soon became commingled with a variety of false and selfish maxims, which destroyed its efficacy. For it is to be remarked that, though we may occasionally find this and other just or benevolent sentiments in the writings of heathen sages, yet, being broken off from their connection with the Divine revelations which originated them, they were regarded merely as the opinions of men, and, wanting the *authority* of God, their original author, they had not the force of LAW. But Christ, by taking this great rule into his own moral code, has restored the authority; and it now stands as a part of the law of his religion, enforced by his enactment, and guarded, like all other Divine laws, by the sanctions of life or death. This makes one of the grand distinctions between the sayings of wise men among the Gentiles, and those of our Lord and his apostles, in the few instances in which they most agree. But there is another. Such sentiments were the sounder parts of a generally corrupt and false system, noble relics of a better age; just as we still see the broken, but beautiful sculpture of the Greeks and Romans sometimes built up into the mud walls of those barbarian nations which subverted their empire. These moral maxims, however, were either useless, or their influence was greatly counteracted by the lax and vicious notions and prejudices which were held along with them, and which took hold of corrupt human nature much more deeply than the little truth which remained in the heathen world. Such rules of obvious equity for instance, were, among them, generally limited to certain classes of men. A Greek philosopher, when asked how a man should conduct himself to his *friends*, answered in words approaching those of our Lord, "As he wishes they should conduct themselves to him;" but he would not have applied this rule to his *enemies*. A Roman would say to the same effect as the text, *Quod tibi fieri vis, fac alteri;* but he would not include his *slaves* within the rule. And though among the Jews, Maimonides has been quoted as furnishing a similar maxim, partially imitated, no doubt, from the New Testament, "All things whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do you the same to your *brethren* in the law, and in the commandment;" the bigotry of the Jew puts in the emphatic limitation, TO YOUR BRETHREN, meaning those of his own nation. It is not, therefore, considered simply in itself, that this precept of our Lord is to be admired, but as it is a part of a moral system throughout perfectly pure and benevolent, comprising truth without countenancing error, and making its rules universal in their application to all mankind. Perhaps it was with some reference to the full and ample meaning which it derived from the principles and spirit which run through the whole discourse in which it stands, that it was commended to

ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 ¶ [f] Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 * Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

[f] Luke xiii. 24.

* Or, *how.*

the convictions of Alexander Severus, although a heathen; for in preference to similar sentences, found among the writers of his own nation, with which he must have been acquainted, he caused this saying of Christ to be written on the walls of his palace, and would sometimes order it to be pronounced aloud by a public officer. The rule, however, is to be soberly interpreted. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," signifies not a blind and wayward will or desire on our part, but one which is reasonable in itself, and consistent with the principles of religion. The maxim, also, must have respect to circumstances; and signifies what in like relations and conditions we would have done to ourselves; but even then not what another might lawfully do to us or for us, but what we should have a right to expect him to do, on the ground of duty and obligation, whether arising from equity or Christian charity. When this precept is said to be *the law and the prophets*, we are to understand the phrase in the same way as when St. Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law;" that is, as charity leads necessarily to the discharge of all the duties we owe to our neighbour, so this great rule of *equity* "is the law and prophets," by leading to the practice of all that charity and justice which both require of us in our conduct toward our fellow creatures.

Verses 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c.*—These words commence the hortatory conclusion of our Lord's sermon, in which he enforces the vigorous application of the whole soul to the great duties which he had so clearly taught, and so strikingly illustrated. The metaphor he here employs is that of a low and strait gate, at the entrance of a narrow path, such paths as led to strongly fortified citadels, in which all who fly from danger might find "*life*" and safety in times of military invasion. But one access was usually allowed to such places, and that not only *narrow*, but often precipitous and rocky, that so it might be the more easily defended. The opposite to this is the wide and lofty gate, and the broad way leading to undefended cities, where the careless inhabitants could easily be surprised by an invading enemy, and be suddenly destroyed. Palestine had places answering to each description. By these allusions we are taught that all are in danger; that there is but one way to life and safety, and that narrow and difficult, requiring care to find, and vigour to pursue; that there is also a broad, smooth, and inviting path, easy to discover, and recommended, too, by the choice of the greater number; and that the result of preferring temporary ease and convenience will be in the end certain destruction. The metaphor of the *strait gate*, and the *narrow path*, has reference to the previous doctrines which our Lord had delivered. The principles unfolded, and the duties enjoined in them, indicated the only way to eternal life. Yet they are difficult to our corrupt nature to practise, and require a constant course of self-denial and vigorous exertion. The entrance itself is said to be *strait*. In some cases the gates leading to the hill forts and citadels would admit little more than only the person himself,—he could take in with him no load of goods, no cumbrous apparatus for luxury, and might be thankful to save himself, and leave all the rest behind. If this be the allusion, the remunerations of worldly interest and honour, of self and pride, which the very entrance into the Christian life requires, may be figuratively represented. But this strait gate once entered, we have still a narrow pathway before us, and a toilsome ascent; for those commentators greatly err who take the straitness to be the difficulties to the entrance merely, and tell us that these being surmounted, and good habits formed, the rest of the way will be smooth and delightful. The pleasures of piety are indeed a reality; the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness; but the joys of religion lessen not its difficulties: they only animate us to surmount them: and no such habits are or can be formed as shall render our nature prone to hard and self-denying services; so that we shall daily have to practise the same lessons of self-denial, of vigilance, of resistance to evil. We must be always toiling up the steep in vigorous effort, until we reach the place of safety, when only we can be said to enter into "*life*." Hence it is that *the way* itself, evidently meaning the whole way, is said to be *narrow*. Difficulties and dangers will beset us through our whole course, requiring constant effort on our part to resist the temptation to strike out into by-paths, or to climb the mounds on either side, in order to gain a broader and easier path. The followers of Pythagoras justly said that there are various ways of sinning, and that evil is indefinite; but that good consists in one precise and determined

15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

s St. Luke, chap. vi, 43.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. s Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

point; so that the one must be easy, the other difficult; just as it is easier to miss a mark than to hit it. To this notion Origen seems to allude when he says, in reference to our Lord's words in this place, "Good is one; but moral turpitude is various: truth is one; but the contrary, falsehoods, are many: genuine righteousness is one; but there are many forms of hypocrisy." Both the *gate* and the *way* are strait and narrow; but, on the other hand, nothing is easier or more gratifying to our fallen nature than to neglect all these precepts of Christ; to make a show of religion rather than practise it; to hate our enemies rather than love them; to keep our alms rather than distribute them; to seek the things of this life "first," rather than "the kingdom of God first;" and to judge severely rather than charitably.—The ease with which vice is practised, and the struggles which virtue requires, are subjects of common remark among heathen moralists: how much more would they have complained had they carried their notions of virtue to the extent of these precepts of Christ! There is, however, here nothing to discourage: to *strive* to enter in is ours; but we shall never be left to strive in our own strength, if we remember the words of our Divine Teacher, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find." And whatever self-denial and struggles may be called for, even these destroy not, but increase the joys of piety.—Narrow, obstructed, and precipitous as the way may be, it is yet "a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace;" for this very reason, that it is the sure way to life; and that every step brings us nearer to that city of God into which no enemy can enter, and where the security of our immortal interests shall be confirmed for ever.

The οτι, *because*, in verse 14, Bengelius, Whitby, and others render *but*, which continues the reason for the exhortation: "Enter ye in at the strait gate," that is, *strive* to enter in, Luke xiii, 24. The reading, τι στενη, *how narrow is the gate!* rests, however, upon weighty evidence of MSS. and versions; yet exclamations are very unusual in our Lord's style.

And few there be that find it.—"And if," says an ancient father, "there are but few that find it, how much smaller still the number of those who pursue it to the end! some falling off in the beginning, others in the middle of their course, and others when just upon the point of finishing it." But let no one consider the narrowness of the way as any thing but a proof of Divine wisdom and mercy. License could be no favour: for restraint falls upon what is injurious to ourselves, and hurtful to society. But this is its benevolent rule, for the religion of Christ is not ascetic. Monkish austerity only nurtures the vices of the mind, while it seems to castigate those of the flesh. The mortification prescribed in the New Testament is the direct mortification of sin; and this must be universal, whether of the flesh or of the spirit. Every thing is left to us unprohibited by which human felicity can be connected with glorifying God.

Verse 15. *Beware of false prophets, &c.*—The word prophet is here to be taken in the sense of a public religious teacher, a sense in which the term *prophet* is frequently used. The scribes and Pharisees seem intended in the first instance; but the caution lies equally strong against all false teachers, and teachers of falsehood, both of whom are to be rejected by Christians, who violate this very rule of our Lord whenever they encourage their ministry. Προσεχετε, rendered *beware*, when followed by απο, signifies "to guard against," so as *to avoid*, and is not to be considered as a mere caution, but a strong prohibition against giving them the least countenance.

In sheep's clothing.—Some suppose a reference here to the long robes made of fine wool worn by those of the Pharisees and scribes who professed the greatest sanctity, and the deepest skill in the law, or to the μηλωτη, the hairy mantle of the prophets; but what follows, *inwardly they are ravening wolves*, shows that the expression is proverbial, and describes a designing religious hypocrite. The cruel nature and the devouring rapacity of the wolf rendered that beast of prey a fit emblem of the Jewish doctors, whom our Lord so severely reproves for devouring widows' houses under a pretence of sanctity, and for an unbounded avarice, and whose rage against him and his disciples could only be satisfied with blood. The emblem is equally descriptive of the corrupt priesthood of all fallen Churches, when not restrained by the civil authorities. Avarice is their sin, deception the means by which they gratify it, and to their hatred and rage must every faithful man be exposed who brings their doctrines and characters into the reproving light of truth.

Verse 16. *By their fruits.*—Some take *fruits* to mean their *doctrines*, others, their *works*. Both may be understood. Bad men sometimes, indeed, teach good doctrines, but not the class of men here referred to. Error is the instrument by which they delude in order that they may devour. Still

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 [h] Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, [i] Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast

[h] Matt. iii, 10.

[i] Rom. ii, 23; James i, 22.

the conduct, comprehending the spirit and temper, is the most certain rule of judgment. "Try a man," says Demophilus, "rather by his works than by his speeches; for many can talk well that live ill."

Grapes of thorns, &c.—Grapes and figs were among the valuable produce of Palestine. Thorn, *ακανθα*, is the general name for all prickly shrubs, from *ακη, a point.* Some of these appear to have borne a kind of useless, noxious berry; for the Jews speak of "thorn grapes," in opposition to the grapes of the vine. The word *τριβολος, thistle*, is, in Hebrews vi, 8, rendered *brier.* Like *ακανθα*, it is a general term for prickly, useless, or noxious plants or shrubs. How apposite are these metaphors to express the characters of these false teachers, and to show that not only is nothing profitable to man, either in doctrine or example, to be expected from them, but that they are mischievous and noxious! This is strengthened by what follows.

Verses 17, 18. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, &c.*—As is the tree so is its fruit, and the tree must be good before the fruit can be good; a plain declaration that as GOOD TEACHERS must first be GOOD MEN, so no one can fulfil the office of a minister of Christ in his Church, or ought to be appointed to that office, who has not given previous evidence of the renewal of his own heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nor, in case of his having fallen from this grace, ought he to be continued in his office; for *a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.* *Δενδρον σαπρον* properly signifies a tree which is decayed and rotten, but is here evidently used for trees which are bad IN KIND, bringing forth noxious fruit, in opposition to good trees, those which bear salutary and refreshing fruits.

Verse 19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth, &c.*—This verse being repeated from Matt. iii, 10, some critics have determined it to be an interpolation from the margin, under the pretence that it interrupts the sense; a sufficiently poor reason for rejecting it, and quite unfounded. For as to the argument that it interrupts the sense, it appears on the contrary most appositely to close this branch of the discourse, by warning the false teachers themselves of their final doom, and destroying, by that sentence, all sympathy between them and the people they might lead astray. It is as though he had said, Can you be instructed in the way to heaven by those who are themselves in the road to hell? Will you commit your souls to the care of those who have no care for their own? The infallible test of the false prophets is also repeated,—*Wherefore, αραγε,* CERTAINLY, if in no other way, yet *by their fruits ye shall know, επιγνωσεσθε, clearly discern and distinguish them;* for the compound verb has a heightened sense. It is the duty of all Christians, with candour and fidelity, to bring all to this test who profess to be their teachers "in faith and verity;" and the rule will not deceive them.

Verse 21. *Not every one that saith unto me.*—Here the same subject is continued; and lest Christ should be thought by any to confine his caution against false teachers and guides to the Jewish doctors, he shows that his words looked forward to those also who should appear in the Christian Church, those who should call him LORD. That he speaks prospectively, appears also from the reference to those miraculous gifts which were to be bestowed upon the first preachers of the Gospel. The duty of rejecting false teachers is mightily *enforced;* for if a man be "a worker of iniquity," he is not to be received as a Christian minister, although he may be able to *prophesy*, in the proper sense, that is, foretell things to come; and *cast out devils*, and do *many wonderful works.* But if so, the lower gifts of learning and eloquence in a minister are never to be thought a substitute for true piety, and in themselves give no claim to the office. The awful words are also applicable to the case of all unholy professors of Christ's holy religion, though not ministers.

Verse 22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.*—As before they called Christ LORD, in the language of heartless profession, now they shall say to him, LORD! LORD! in the imploring language of convicted culprits, urging vain and hopeless pleas for admission into his kingdom. *In that day*, evidently meaning the day of judgment, THAT DAY, emphatically the last day, the day

out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, [k] I never knew you: [l] depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 ¶ Therefore [m] whosoever heareth

[k] Luke xiii, 27.—[l] Psalm vi, 8.—[m] Luke vi, 47.

which closes the course of time, and fixes the states of men in eternity; so that here Christ declares himself to be the future judge of the world, and, by implication, he asserts his Divinity, for who can judge the world but the Being who knows the secrets of all hearts?

Prophesied in thy name.—Both teaching, in the common sense of the term, and foretelling things to come, or, as prophesying also means, the power of speaking in lofty strains of eloquence under special impulses. That all these may be included in prophesying in the name of Christ is probable, because our Lord is speaking of the supernatural gifts with which his disciples would be endowed. This gift was not in every case confined to good men. Balaam had the gift of prophecy; and the prophetic spirit fell also, for the time, on Saul and Caiaphas.

Cast out devils.—Judas had this power given to him as one of the twelve apostles, and that of healing diseases miraculously. (See chapter x, 1.) And Origen testifies that devils were sometimes cast out by wicked men using the name of Christ; all which was permitted, not to accredit the character of the persons, but the truth of the doctrine of Christ. "An awful consideration," says one, "that a man should be able to cast out devils, and at last be himself cast to the devil."

Verse 23. *And then will I profess unto them, &c.*—Ομολογεω has the sense of *declaring openly* and *publicly*. Christ will declare their sentence before the assembled world at the day of final judgment.

I never knew you.—To know signifies here *to acknowledge, to approve*. Examples of this sense of γινωσκω are not only found in the LXX. and in the New Testament, but in classic Greek authors. I never acknowledged and approved you as ministers; ye had not my sanction in that character; nor shall you have the reward of faithful ministers: *depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. But though the words were primarily spoken of false prophets, or public teachers, they also foretell the doom of false disciples. There is some difficulty in conceiving how miraculous gifts should be possessed by those whom our Lord calls "workers of iniquity." If it be urged that such persons might have fallen from a grace they once possessed, we are met by the strong negative, "*I never, ουδεποτε, knew you.*" Perhaps this is a mysterious circumstance which we must wholly resolve into the sovereignty of Him who, as to those gifts, says the Apostle Paul, "divideth to every man severally as HE WILLS." Still it does not follow that they were bestowed at first on men entirely devoid of true religious feeling. This no doubt prompted them to join the Churches of Christ; and they gave such evidence of it as warranted the reception of them by its members; but as miraculous gifts were imparted sometimes to great numbers at once, the communication of them could not be regulated by some particular degree of religious attainment in the recipient, for then we must suppose the same degree in all. When Peter preached to the company in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell upon all present, and yet they were not all equal in knowledge, or in the strength of religious principle. Gifts were very general in the Church at Corinth; yet many of them were "carnal," says St. Paul; not wholly carnal, indeed, but comparatively so, for he addresses them all as acknowledged members of the Church. And if the gifts of the Spirit had been wholly confined to mature Christians, or even to entirely sound and decided ones, a visible distinction of character would have been made somewhat inconsistent with the lesson taught in the parable of the wheat and the tares, which indicates that no infallible test, universally applicable, is placed in the Church in the present world, by which perfectly to ascertain the good from the evil. Perhaps the character of Judas will assist us on this difficult subject. That he was an inquirer after truth, and not wholly a hypocrite, from the first, appears to have been the fact; but it was equally clear that he was strongly avaricious by natural disposition, which evil quality not being at any time fully and entirely mortified and renounced by him, though suppressed in the first stage of his discipleship, it at length prevailed against those better feelings and convictions by which, it is reasonable to conclude, he was once influenced, so that he became first a secret, then an open, "worker of iniquity." Of him Christ NEVER fully APPROVED, because the latent evils of his heart had never been fully mortified, so that they prevailed speedily against him; and having no "depth of earth," the good seed sown there, and which, indeed, at one time began to spring up, quickly "withered." In such an imperfect state, as to the power of religion in the heart, the "carnal" members of the Corinthian Church were and such might be the general character of those of whom our Lord here speaks. They were not, when they received these supernatural gifts, openly wicked, and wholly

these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, [a] the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

[a] Mark i, 22; Luke iv, 32.

dead to religion, but superficial and halting in their best state of mind, although under that degree of religious influence which, if improved, would have led to full salvation. They could never, therefore, be fully approved by Christ, though admitted as disciples; and they finally became *workers of iniquity*, though endowed with miraculous gifts, which never appear to have been among the appointed means of grace, and were never regarded more or less as infallible evidences of it.

Verses 24–27. *Therefore, whosoever heareth, &c.*—The conclusion of this discourse tends solemnly to impress the whole upon our attention. The result, as to our eternal interests, depends upon our HEARING *these sayings of Christ, and* DOING *them;* so that they are presented to us in the very form of Christian LAW, with the sanctions of life and death annexed; another proof that our Lord here speaks, not as a mere man, but as the lawgiver himself. For what mere man, though acting under a Divine commission, could use such language in such a connection?—*These sayings of mine*, referring to no higher authority than his own, and promising eternal safety, and threatening final ruin, as his hearers might be obedient to HIS *sayings*, or otherwise. On the fine comparison which follows, it will be remarked that the *wise man* is both a hearer and a doer of Christ's sayings; the foolish man a hearer only, which implies, it is true, approval and profession of discipleship, but nothing more. The wisdom of the former consists in choosing a rock for the foundation of his house; prudently foreseeing that not only would storms arise, but that the coming rains would produce those "floods," οι ποταμοι, *land floods*, or *torrents*, by which its strength would be put to severe tests, and that it could only resist the assaults of the elements by virtue of an immovable foundation. The folly of the latter is marked by his want of regard to the trials and dangers of the stormy season, and his trusting his whole building upon the sand or earth, which is apparently firm in summer, but liable, after that season, to be swept away by the tempestuous rains of those climates; the χειμαρροι ποταμοι, as Homer expresses it, *the winter torrents*, which either swell the streams, or themselves form temporary rivers by their own copiousness. It is by these references to the climate of Palestine, the violence of its winter winds, the impetuous rush of its sudden rains, and the power of the torrents thus formed, that the force of the comparison is made manifest. By these three words, *rain, winds*, and *floods*, the severity of our great trials in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, is strongly pointed out. Rain and hail fall with violence upon the roof and upper parts; winds try the sides of the house; floods and rushings of water, the foundation. And then, should it fall, *great will be the fall of it.* "It made a great show," says one, "while it stood, and it made as great a noise when it fell; the fall being the more notorious by how much the former profession was the more specious."

Verse 28. *Were astonished at his doctrine.*—These doctrines came indeed to them with so powerful an evidence of their truth and reasonableness, that they appear to have commanded universal assent among the people who heard them; but they were so distant from common opinion and practice, so different from what they had been accustomed to hear from their own teachers, so clear and full, so practical and hallowed, so solemn and weighty, so searching and convincing, that it is no wonder that they were astonished, εξεπλησσοντο, *struck with astonishment at his doctrine.* And, familiar as we are with this Divine discourse, it can never be seriously read and pondered over without reviving the same feeling. "These are indeed the TRUE WORDS of God."

Verse 29. *As one having authority, and not as the scribes.*—He taught them, not as a mere expounder of the law, which the scribes professed to be, nor merely in a more perfect manner, though this did not escape them; but there was something beyond this, which most strongly arrested their attention This was the authority with which he spoke, for he spoke not as an interpreter of the law only, but as the *legislator* himself; giving his interpretations the same authority as the

original precept, and adding others as of equal obligation and consequence. A frequent mode of speaking by the scribes, when they were teaching, was, *The wise men say; Our rabbins have determined.* Those of the school of Hillel referred to him as their authority; those who followed that of Shammai appealed to him. This practice of referring to human authority, seeing that every thing almost was explained by traditions, or the transmitted sentiments of the ancients, was probably used by the scribes of our Lord's time; and, if so, his usual formula, *But I say unto you*, is rendered the more remarkable and striking: he puts aside all human authority, and asserts his own.

CHAPTER VIII.

2 Christ cleanseth the leper, 5 healeth the centurion's servant, 14 Peter's mother-in-law, 16 and many other diseased: 18 showeth how he is to be followed: 23 stilleth the tempest on the sea, 28 driveth the devils out of two men possessed, 31 and suffereth them to go into the swine.

1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 [a]And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 [b]And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and

[a] Mark i, 40.

[b] Luke v, 13.

CHAPTER VIII. Verse 1. *Great multitudes followed him.*—They had been deeply affected by his discourse on the mount, and the charm still drew them after him. The circumstance is, however, mentioned as an introduction to the miracle which follows, to show that it was done publicly in the presence of a great number of witnesses; so that it became to them the seal of the reality of that "authority" which Christ had assumed in his late sermon, and with which they had been so much impressed.

Verse 2. *A leper.*—From the nature of this loathsome disease, its cure, even in cases not hopeless, could only be effected by slow degrees; so that the instantaneous healing of a leper, and that by a touch, was an unequivocal miracle. The spots of the leprosy dilate themselves until they cover the whole body; the pain is not very great, but great debility of the system is induced, and great grief and depression of the spirits, so as sometimes to drive the unhappy patient to self-destruction. But this miserable object was now at the feet of Him who could both pity and save.

Worshipped him.—This he did by prostrating himself; a common mark of profound reverence among the Jews, and other eastern people. Religious worship is not intended, but civil respect; for he probably knew nothing more of Christ than that he was a great prophet, endued with the power of working miracles. Nor is his address, "Lord," to be taken in a religious sense; but was usual with the Jews when speaking to a superior. If, however, he knew and believed him to be the Messiah, there might be a farther reference in his mind, both in the act of prostration, and in the application of the title, "Lord," Κυριε, which was also used in the most sacred sense; for it is not improbable that he might have deeper views than the brevity of the history indicates; but this does not clearly appear. However that may be, he had full faith in Christ's power; as far as he knew him he trusted him; and by this teaches us that our higher knowledge ought to call forth a proportionate faith.

Verse 3. *And touched him.*—He that touched a leper, or touched a dead body, was by the law rendered unclean. Our Lord might have healed the one and raised the other without this action; but in each case he *put forth his hand and touched.* This was probably to show that the law was not applicable to him, who, by touching a leper, instead of contracting impurity, imparted health, and by whose touch death itself became life. So he took our nature without its defilement, and lived sinless in a sinful world; coming into contact with fallen and corrupt man only to sanctify and to save him. Many comparisons have been founded upon this history by fanciful divines and preachers, who have traced numerous parallels between the leprosy and our natural corruption, and between the manner in which our Lord healed the leper, and that in which he restores diseased souls to soundness. No doubt all the miracles of healing performed by our Lord were TYPES as well as ATTESTATIONS. They exhibited his compassion, and they hold him forth under that affecting character, which he himself professed, the "Physician" of souls. The true resemblance was not, however, designed to be pursued into minute particulars, which, as they rest on mere human authority, are without authority; and it is enough for us to know that he both CAN and WILL make clean from sin all who come to him in the same spirit as this poor leper.

touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that [e]Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

5 ¶ [d] And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I

[e] Lev. xiv, 4.

[d] Luke vii, 1.

Saying, I will, be thou clean, &c.—Here the latent Divinity of our Lord again breaks forth. As he taught with authority, he heals with authority, and in both, the very MANNER places him infinitely above the highest commissioned servants: I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN! No wonder this language has reminded critics of the sublime sentence, "Let there be light, and there was light." But in marking the sublimity of the style, they have often forgotten the sublimity of the person, who was "the Most High" himself; for the use of this language by any other would have been no subject of just admiration, it would have been greatly criminal.

Verse 4. *See thou tell no man.*—It is very singular that acute commentators upon this passage should have elaborated so many grave hypothetical reasons for the secrecy imposed upon the leper in this instance, when the miracle was evidently performed in the presence of "the multitudes" that followed Christ. The meaning clearly is, Hasten to the priest to be examined by him and pronounced clean, and fit to be received into society, *and offer the gift that Moses commanded;* and, till this is done, *tell no man.* The reason is obvious; that the priest might pronounce him clean, according to his office in such cases, on an unbiassed judgment of the fact.

For a testimony unto them.—The plural, *αυτοις*, being used has led some to suppose that the *priests* were not intended as the persons to be benefited by the *testimony* of this miracle, since but one is mentioned,—*show thyself to the priest. Priest* is, however, probably used in a collective sense for the whole body who might then be attending their ministrations at Jerusalem. Or the plural may be used to comprehend both the priests, and all to whom the man might afterward speak of his cure; for the fact, that the priest had pronounced him clean, and in token of that had permitted him to enter the temple and offer his gift, was a public and official testimony to the truth of the miracle.

Verse 5. *A centurion.*—A Roman officer, commander of a hundred men. The centurions were usually stationed in the towns of the Roman provinces to preserve order. The probability is, that this officer, through his residence in Judea, had attained a knowledge of the true God; he had certainly given profound attention to the accounts of the character, teaching, and miracles of our Lord; and if he had made himself acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, of which there can be little doubt, he might regard him, not as a mere prophet, however great, but as that mysterious and exalted personage announced in those Scriptures as the Messiah. Certain it is that he regarded him as something more than mortal, as appears from the sequel.

Verse 6. *Sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.*—Not merely paralytic, but also afflicted with strong pains, *grievously tormented.* The verb *βασανιζειν* signifies to torture, from *βασανος*, a Lydian stone, upon which metals were proved; hence the verb signifies to apply an engine of torture, in examinations of criminals, and metaphorically, *to afflict and torment.*

Verses 7–10. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him, &c.*—The benevolent promptitude with which our Lord yields to the centurion's request, is the first circumstance to be noted in the narration; the second is the humility of the centurion himself, joined with his singular faith. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only speak the word, ειπε λογω*, which is the reading adopted by Wetstein and others, on the authority of many MSS., and some of the versions; *command by a word, and my servant shall be healed.* But it is chiefly in the reason which the centurion assigns, in urging that it was unnecessary for Christ to go to his house, that the peculiar clearness of this pious soldier's views, and the strength of his confidence, are particularly manifested. *For I am a man under authority, &c.;* the sense of which is, For though I myself am A MAN, and SUBORDINATE

say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed,

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to others, being under the authority of Cesar and my superior officers, yet having soldiers under me, *I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh;* obeying my word with instant promptitude and entire subjection: how much more shall all diseases, and therefore all natural things whatever, obey thee, who hast SUPREME AUTHORITY and ABSOLUTE POWER in thyself! That this man must have had some highly superior glimpses of the Divinity of Christ must be supposed, to account for this language. It was not the hyperbolical language of an oriental, for he was a Roman; and that it was not the language of compliment is certain from his having a faith in Christ corresponding to it; a faith at which our Lord *marvelled*, and which he declared so great that he had not found a faith equal to it in Israel. He was surely taught of God, and to him had already been given, in some considerable degree, "a revelation of the mystery of Christ," which had not been made to others. He considered our Lord as possessed in himself of more than human power; and a steady view and firm belief of that fact was the foundation of his absolute trust.

Verse 11. *Many shall come from the east, &c.*—This instance of a pious Gentile having so readily embraced the knowledge of the true God, and having come through the study of the Jewish Scriptures to so clear an acquaintance with the character of the Messiah, of whom they speak, and farther, so readily admitting that evidence of the claim of Jesus to be that Messiah which his numerous miracles had afforded, here leads our Lord to predict the future calling and salvation of the Gentiles from all parts of the earth. Those who interpret the words, *and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*, of the reception of the Gentiles into the Church on earth, and becoming the sons of Abraham through faith, and heirs of the promises made to him, forget that the sense of this phrase is fixed by our Lord in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the latter, in his disembodied state, is represented as in "THE BOSOM of Abraham." The expression refers to the custom of reclining on couches at table, where he that was nearest another was said to be or to lie in his bosom; so that the felicity of Lazarus was expressed in that parable, just as here, under the idea of a great banquet, where the most honoured guests reclined next to the principal personages. Thus Josephus represents one of the seven Maccabee brethren encouraging the rest to persevere in their religion though they should die for it, "for Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, will receive us after our decease *into their bosoms*." The words, therefore, respect the felicity of the believing Gentiles in heaven; where, so far from being placed in inferior circumstances to the Jews, they are represented as sitting, or rather reclining, *ανακλινομαι*, with the glorified patriarchs themselves, though not their natural descendants. Thus, those "that are of the faith," whether Jew or Gentile, "are blessed with faithful Abraham," and none but such. This mode of representing celestial felicity under the metaphor of a social banquet, was not peculiar to the Jews. It is often found in Greek authors. So Epictetus, *εση ποτε των θεων αξιος συμποτης*, "You will in due time be a worthy guest of the gods." And Socrates, in his Apology, speaks of future blessedness as a state of delightful converse and abode with the renowned heroes and sages of antiquity. All goodness is, however, by these heathens, shut out of this conception; whereas, as it is used in the Scriptures, it stands connected with the noblest and most spiritual hopes.

Verse 12. *But the children of the kingdom, &c.*—The Jews are here intended; and the phrase employed was equivalent to their expressions, "a son of the world to come," and "children of the world to come;" meaning those who expected and were particularly entitled to the kingdom of Messiah.—The import of the phrase, *cast out into outer darkness*, can only be understood by referring also to the customs of those countries.—Great feasts were always made at night; the house in which the guests assembled was brilliantly illuminated with a profusion of lights, which were not only for use, but symbols of joy and gladness, so that those who intruded without authority, or misconducted themselves, when cast out, were thrust into *outer darkness*, or the *darkness without;* and their disappointment and disgrace are expressed in this passage by "weeping and gnashing of teeth," words too strong indeed to indicate the mortification of being merely excluded from a feast, and leading us therefore to the thing intended; exclusion from heaven into the darkness and despair of an eternal misery. How different is this doctrine of Christ from the rabbinical bigotry, that "all Israel should have a portion in the world to come: but that the heathen should

so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

14 ¶ [e] And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 ¶ [f] When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, [g] Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great mul-

[e] Mark i, 29; Luke iv, 38.—[f] Mark i, 32; Luke iv, 40.—[g] Isaiah liii, 4; 1 Peter ii, 24.

be fuel for hell fire!" On the contrary, God will save true believers of all nations, whether Jew or Gentile; but the obstinately wicked of every race, and without respect of persons, shall suffer the just judgment which shall follow rejected mercy.

Verse 13. *And as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, &c.*—This is God's rule of proportion: it is done to us "according to our faith." The centurion's trust had a just proportion to his knowledge of Christ's character; and God proportioned the blessing to his trust. *And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

Verse 14. *Peter's wife's mother.*—Peter's residence was at Capernaum; and from this passage it appears that he was a married man. With little grace therefore do the papists contend for the celibacy of the clergy, when it is clear the very apostle of whom they boast as *the rock* on which their Church is built was married, and remained so long after he had entered fully upon his labours as an apostle, 1 Cor. ix, 5.

Verse 15. *He touched her hand, &c.*—Sometimes our Lord healed by a word, sometimes by a touch, and in the case of the leper by both. Perhaps in this case both were used; for St. Luke says, "*he rebuked the fever*," as he rebuked the winds and the waves on another occasion; and his assuming this tone of authority was an illustration of the words of the centurion. All things, the elements of nature, the restless seas, the boisterous winds, the fiercest diseases, and, let us not forget, the infection of sin itself in the heart of man, acknowledge his AUTHORITY, and yield to his REBUKE. *And she arose and ministered;* which was in proof of the instant communication of health and vigour; leaving behind no debility, as in the case of all fevers cured by ordinary means. So perfect were the miracles of Christ! That she arose and ministered to them, that is, supplied them with refreshments, is perhaps an indication that she was the mistress of the family: if so, Peter was but a lodger there, as her son-in-law. Her humble rank in life forbids us, however, to think that she had servants at command; so that she herself actually served at table what her hospitality had provided. Such were the first disciples of Christ, and such the lowly manner in which the Lord of all things resided among men!

Verse 16. *When the even was come.*—From the other evangelists it appears that the mother-in-law of Peter was healed on the Sabbath; and as the day among the Jews ended at sunset, the people, now that the Sabbath was past, brought their sick. When cases of affliction were immediately before our Lord, he healed them instantly, though it were on the Sabbath day, deciding that it was "lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." But he did not go BEYOND the immediate necessity of the case, even "to do good." He did not INVITE the attendance of the sick upon him on that day, though it was a day of leisure with their friends to bring them, lest their just reverence for the Sabbath should be diminished, and his own sacred exercises in the synagogues, and those of his disciples, should be interrupted. They probably knew his views on these subjects, and therefore only when the Sabbath was over brought the cases to him.

Cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.—The terms here employed fully refute the notion of those who resolve demoniacal possessions into those bodily diseases with which the possessed were often afflicted at the same time. He *cast out* εξεβαλε, *the spirits*, and HEALED, εθεραπευσεν, *the sick*. An essential distinction between the cases could not be more strongly marked. See note on Mark i, 34.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.*—That is, thus were fulfilled the words of Isaiah, liii, 4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." St. Matthew's quotation differs a little from the Hebrew, and somewhat more from the present copies of the LXX; but is, in sense, the same. The only difficulty lies in this application of the words of the prophet to the *taking* and *bearing* of bodily diseases, when they refer primarily to the taking away of sin, by those vicarious sufferings of the Messiah of which Isaiah unquestionably speaks. This has led many commentators to consider this quotation as another instance of the use of prophecy by the evangelist in an accommodated sense; on which some remarks will be found in the note on chapter i, 22. But this objec-

titudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 [h] And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The

[h] St. Luke, chap. ix, 57.

tionable theory is applied, in the instance before us, under very defective views of our Lord's atonement, and the import of the prophet's words respecting it. Through that atonement all our blessings come; and as all our sufferings are the consequences of sin, none of them could have been removed had not propitiation been made for sin, and the right to deliver us from all its consequences been acquired by our Redeemer. Whatever blessings, therefore, our Lord bestowed during his ministry on earth, were given with reference to that "bearing" of the PENALTY of sin which he was ultimately to sustain, and by virtue of which he was to take it away, in all its consequences, as to all those who should come to him in faith. And as by virtue of that anticipated atonement he, while on earth, "forgave sins," so by virtue of the same anticipated atonement he healed the diseases of the body, all which are the fruits of sin. Whenever, therefore, he did either of these, removing either sin itself from the consciences of men, or any of its consequences from their persons, in virtue of his being the appointed sin-offering, those words of the prophet, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," were directly fulfilled: since these were the proofs and effects of his substitution in our place as the accepted sacrifice; they were all, in a word, demonstrations of the efficacy of his atonement. Nor are we to suppose, as the criticism here objected to does, that Christ "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" by actual vicarious suffering only when upon the cross. He bore them, as the penalty of sin, in his agony as well as at his crucifixion; and often previously, whenever he "groaned in spirit," and was "troubled." All his humiliations, and all his mental distresses, in coming into a world so full of sin and misery, formed a part of the grand sum of vicarious suffering by which "the sin of the world" was to be taken away; and upon his spirit the sight of that accumulated misery, so often presented by the multitudes of sick and possessed and tormented persons, produced a sorrowful effect. We see this often exemplified: we see it at the tomb of Lazarus, although he was about to raise him to life. His sorrow then was not common sorrow; his groaning in spirit cannot be thus explained; and the "compassion" of Christ on other occasions, to the miserable, was not the common compassion of men, but a distinct and deeper feeling; a part of the load and pressure of trouble laid upon his infinitely tender spirit, which he was to sustain. Hence after his miracles of healing we have no expressions of exultation arising from the triumphs of his benevolence; no indications of that joyous feeling which relieves the painful sympathy of merely humane persons when they have succeeded in conveying relief. The whole mass of the world's wo lay upon his spirit from the beginning to the end; for as his office was to take away the "sin of the world," he must first bear its weight. It was in this sense that St. Matthew says, *he took our infirmities* and *bore our sicknesses*; not, certainly, by transferring the infirmities and sickness to his own person, for he became neither infirm nor sick; nor do the words used signify simply to take or bear away, much less the Hebrew term used by Isaiah, but that he took them and carried them as A LOAD OR BURDEN, the sustaining of which was a part of the process of the great atonement. In the strictest sense, therefore, the prophecy quoted by the evangelist was here "fulfilled;" not indeed fully, for Christ had much more to sustain; but still directly and properly. It is remarkable, too, that this is the comprehensive sense in which some of the Jewish writers view this passage; which is no small confirmation of the meaning attached by Matthew to the words of Isaiah, since all their prejudices lay against a suffering Messiah. Thus, in their book of Zohar it is said, "There is one temple which is called the temple of the sons of affliction; and when the Messiah comes into that temple, and reads all the afflictions, all the griefs, and all the chastisements of Israel, which came upon them, then all of them *shall come upon him*; and if there were any that would lighten them off from Israel, and take them upon himself, there is no son of man that can bear the chastisements of Israel, because of the punishment of the law, as it is said, *Surely he hath borne our griefs*," *&c.*

Verse 18. *The other side.*—That is, of the lake or sea of Galilee. He departed by water to the south-eastern side, and thus evaded the crowd, to obtain some space for retirement; and probably to avoid keeping great multitudes for any long time together, lest the jealousy of the government might be excited.

Verses 19, 20. *A certain scribe came and said, &c.*—That this man was influenced only by sordid motives, hoping for rank and wealth, if Jesus should prove the Messiah, is very probable from our Lord's reply. *The foxes have holes, &c.* He was about to pass over the lake wearied and exhausted by his

foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 [i] And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

[i] Mark iv, 37; Luke viii, 23.

labours; and in the place to which he was going, there was no house, no family, to receive him. To his own poverty he therefore alludes, since he had no means of providing accommodation where no friendly family was found to receive him. There is great emphasis here in the application of the phrase "Son of man" to himself. "A son of man" is the Jewish phrase for a real human being; but "THE Son of man" is a designation of Messiah, and is taken from Psalm lxxx, 17; and especially from Daniel vii, 13, 14, where the holy prophet says, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," &c. This prophecy was by the Jews uniformly applied to the Messiah; and our Lord, in his answer to the scribe, applies it to himself; yet as though he had said, I am indeed the Son of man spoken of by Daniel, and, as thou professest to believe, the Messiah; but instead of a kingdom, and glory, and dominion, I have not where to lay my head,—no house of my own, much less a palace and a kingdom. Of a spiritual reign the scribe had no notion; and being cut off from the hope of a visible and earthly one, he probably retired. *I will follow thee*, said this forward professor, *whithersoever thou goest;* but he secretly meant, only into the paths of publicity and enjoyment, not into those of humility and suffering. Yet wherever Christ leads, the true disciple must follow him.

Verses 21, 22. *Suffer me first to go and bury my father.*—The father probably was not dead, but aged; and the request was for permission to cease from a constant attendance on Christ, which those were obliged to who were called to the ministry of the word, until his parent should die and be interred. Probably also some worldly feeling, as well as filial affection, might have a share in dictating the request. He was therefore to be put to the test and proved. *Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead;* let those who are dead to all sense of spiritual things, bury those who are corporally dead: in other words, let worldly men take care of worldly interests; thou art called to follow me, and to be trained up to impart spiritual instruction and life to others, and for this every thing is to be forsaken. This is a saying which ought to sink deep into the ears of ministers, and of those who are called to this office. In the phrase, *Let the dead bury their dead*, is an instance of the use of the same word in a sentence in two different senses. It is a rhetorical figure called *antanaclisis*, and occurs often in Scripture, and particularly in the pointed sayings of our Lord, without attending to which they are liable to be misinterpreted. The figurative representation of earthly and wicked men, as in a state of death, was frequent both among Jews and heathens. Thus Philo, "dead to virtue, alive to evil;" and Clemens Alexandrinus remarks that "the philosophers esteem those dead who subject the mind to sense." The disciple who made this request is by tradition said to be Philip. Whoever it might be, it would seem that he remained with Christ.

Verse 23. *And when he was entered into a ship.*—Rather one of the small vessels used for navigating the lake, a fishing vessel, though of considerable size, for his disciples embarked with him. The conversation with the scribe and the disciple just mentioned, took place while our Lord was preparing to embark.

Verse 24. *A great tempest.*—The sea of Galilee, though generally calm, was liable to heavy and sudden hurricanes, coming down from the surrounding mountains.

Verse 26. *O ye of little faith.*—Faith here, as in most places of the New Testament, includes in it the idea of *trust*. Some degree of faith they had, for they came to Christ and awoke him, praying him to save them; but it was mingled with great fears. *Why are ye fearful?* Their faith was not that entire trust which tranquillizes and assures the soul in the greatest danger: in such a case as this, great fear was the evidence of little faith: for how could they perish when their Master was with them; he whose power over nature they had so often seen and acknowledged? For this they were justly reproved.—*He rebuked the winds, and*

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

28 ¶ [k] And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

[k] Mark v, 1; Luke viii, 26.

the sea, &c.—So that it was in the height of the tempest, amid the very rage and fury of the elements, and in the extremity of danger, that he issued his authoritative command, *and there was a great calm.* The very simplicity of the narrative heightens the sublimity of the whole scene as it passes before us;—the suddenness and fury of the storm; the vessel labouring among the overwhelming waves; the terror of the disciples; the calm repose of Jesus, asleep amid all this uproar; the majesty of his action,—"he arose and rebuked the wind and the sea;" the immediate effect,—"there was a great calm,"—so nobly expressed in the original, *και εγενετο γαληνη μεγαλη*, that one almost feels the absolute repose which one almighty word produced. "Not only was the wind laid, but the surface of the sea," says Bishop Pearce, "became smooth and level, which *γαληνη* properly signifies; whereas after a storm is over, the water of the sea is for a long time in motion. This circumstance, therefore, helps to show the full force of the miraculous power exerted."

Verse 27. *What manner of man is this? &c.*—*Man* is not in the original; and the text would have been better translated, What kind of *person* or *being* is this? *ποταπος εστιν ουτος*; for there was here an overwhelming manifestation of the glory and power of Christ's Divine nature; though, like light from a parted cloud, it was quickly shrouded again in the veil of his humble condition and demeanour. Hence it is said by Mark, that the disciples "feared exceedingly;" and by Luke, that "they being afraid wondered."—The danger was over, their fears as to that had subsided; but fear of another kind, a deep and amazing awe in the presence of Him who had just exhibited an attribute of omnipotence. The wonder was great but indefinite; it dazzled rather than enlightened them; but after the resurrection of their Lord they knew how to interpret the whole case. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; at thy rebuke they fled." "Jehovah on high is mightier than the noise of many waters."

Verse 28. *Country of the Gergesenes.*—Mark and Luke say, "the country of the Gadarenes; St. Matthew probably naming it from Gergesa, and the others from Gadara, which were near each other; but the ancient reading was probably *των Γαδαρηνων*, as in Mark and Luke.

Out of the tombs.—Tombs or sepulchres, not only among the Jews, but other easterns also, were often spacious subterranean caves excavated in the rock, and sometimes served as places of abode to those outcasts who were expelled from the habitations of men. A recent traveller, Mr. Light, visited the scene of this miracle and observes, "The tombs still exist in the form of caverns, in the sides of the hills that rise from the lake; and from their wild appearance may well be considered the habitations of men 'exceeding fierce,' possessed by devils. They extend to a distance of more than a mile from the present town."

Verse 29. *What have we to do with thee? &c.*—This phrase implies impatience at being troubled at the presence or interference of another. They apprehended, no doubt, that Christ would dispossess them; and they not only feared this, but that he might inflict upon them some signal punishment *before their time;* that is, before the day of judgment, when evil spirits and wicked men will receive their final and irreversible sentence. Future torment is the sad prospect of both. Let the still living sinner make haste to escape it.

Verse 30. *A herd of swine feeding.*—The Jews were forbidden to eat swine's flesh; but the baser sort of them, for gain, would often breed these animals to sell to foreigners, which was probably the case here, as this part of the country had many Gentiles residing in it. Such Jews were, however, detested by their brethren: hence their rabbins say, "Cursed be the man that bringeth up hogs and dogs!" It was no doubt to punish these degenerate Jews that our Lord suffered the swine to be destroyed by the demons: and as to the question of property, they could have no legal right in such animals; for, by a law made in the time of Hyrcanus, the Jews were forbidden to keep any swine in their country, which, with all other of their country laws in force in the time of Hyrcanus, as we learn from Josephus, Augustus commanded by an edict to be respected by the Roman governors.—No injustice was therefore done them. Gadara, however, as we learn from Josephus,

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

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was so much inhabited by Gentiles as to be popularly called a *Grecian* city; and, as such, was annexed by Augustus to Syria. Here, then, a regular market for swine's flesh was at hand; and this was a temptation to gain which many of the Jewish inhabitants could not resist.

So the devils besought him.—St. Luke mentions but one possessed man, confining his attention, probably, to him with whom our Lord spoke; but he also states the devils to be numerous: "What is thy name? And he said, Legion; because many devils had entered into him."

This history is decisive against those who would resolve the possessions mentioned in the New Testament into cases of madness. For here the whole conversation is evidently carried on, not with the afflicted men themselves, but with some other beings using their organs. For, could these men, if mere lunatics, have known our Lord? Or, if they knew his person, which is unlikely, how should they know him to be *the Son of God*, and give him his most appropriate designation? What could insane men mean by being *tormented before their time?* Or how could they impel the swine into the sea, when they remained still present with Christ, perfectly cured, as appears from St. Luke? Such forced attempts at interpretation, in compliment to the proud but vain philosophy of man, more become an infidel than a professed Christian expositor. On the contrary, the circumstances of this miracle appear to have been minutely recorded in order to demonstrate the reality of these possessions. The devils being permitted to enter the herd of swine, while the men they had before possessed remained at the feet of Christ, calm and still, was a visible proof that a number of distinct though invisible beings had previously employed their malignant agency upon the subjects of our Lord's mercy, but who were rebuked and driven away.

Verse 34. *Depart out of their coasts.*—They seem to have considered this destruction of the herd of swine, which, being large, probably belonged to many proprietors, as a punishment for their violation of the law; and because they feared other judgments, and yet were not brought to repentance, they besought even the world's Redeemer to depart from them! Thus the language of the obstinately wicked to Christ, like that of the devils themselves, was, "What have we to do with thee?" "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." See notes on Mark v, 1, &c., and Luke viii, 26.

CHAPTER IX.

2 Christ cureth one sick of the palsy, 9 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom, 10 eateth with publicans and sinners, 14 defendeth his disciples for not fasting, 20 cureth the bloody issue, 23 raiseth from death Jairus' daughter, 27 giveth sight to two blind men, 32 healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil, 36 and hath compassion on the multitude.

1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 [a]And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed:

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[a] Mark ii, 3; Luke v, 18.

CHAPTER IX. Verse 1. *His own city.*—That is, Capernaum; for here he paid tribute as a citizen, to which relation he became entitled, according to the Jewish laws, by a residence of twelve months. That he had any house of his own here does not appear, but rather the contrary, from the former chapter. He was either entertained by some of his friends, or lodged with one of his disciples, probably Peter, who resided here.

Verse 2. *Thy sins be forgiven thee:*—This he said, seeing "*their faith*," in which faith the paralytic man participated, or perhaps his exceeded even theirs. He who knew the heart, knew that he was not only afflicted, but of "a broken and contrite spirit," a state of mind which might have been produced by sanctified affliction; for he grants the greater mercy first; and then, since the affliction had answered its intended design, he removes that also. Those greatly err who consider that to pronounce the forgiveness of sin, and

and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they

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to heal the palsy, were substantially the same acts, according to the notions of the Jews.—Whatever their views might be, the acts are here kept plainly distinct. First the man's sins are forgiven; but, before his disease is healed, a conversation passes between Christ and the scribes; and the miracle of healing takes place in proof of the power of Christ to forgive sins. It is clear, also, from the objection of the scribes, that they considered the forgiving of the man's sins, and the healing of his diseases, as works of a wholly different kind.

Verse 3. *This man blasphemeth.*—Because our Lord assumed a power to forgive sins, which they justly agreed belonged only to God. See Mark ii, 6, 7. The offended only can forgive the sin of the offender; and had not Christ been God, that is, the Being offended by the sin of man, he would have been guilty of the charge, as taking into his own hands the office of God. Blasphemy, in the sense in which it is here used, and as in other instances applied by the Jews to Christ, signifies, not any reproachful, profane words, malignantly directed against God, but the arrogating of what is proper only to God by a creature; which species of blasphemy the Jews held rendered a man liable to condign punishment.

Verse 4. *Why think ye evil in your hearts?*—Why do ye unjustly account me an impious person and a blasphemer? Their thinking evil signified, not that they were wrong in assuming that God only could forgive sin, but that they had formed a rash and injurious opinion of Christ; which also had this farther "evil," that they ought to have admitted him to be the Messiah because of his miracles, and ought to have so understood their Scriptures as to conclude that the Messiah was a Divine person.

Verse 5. *Whether is easier?*—To a mere mortal man both are impossible: as no man can authoritatively forgive sin, so no man can work a true miracle of healing by his own power. To the Christ, as God, on the contrary, both were equally "easy." He could forgive the sins committed against himself, and he could heal diseases by virtue of his omnipotence. It may be said that the disciples of Christ had the gifts of healing, but not the authority to forgive sin; and one to them was therefore "easier" than the other. Certainly not. The disciples could no more heal than they could forgive sin. The works of this kind which they performed were done in "*the name*" of their Master, and professedly by his communicated power alone. Of "themselves they could do nothing," and they constantly disclaimed it. The argument of our Lord here is, in fact, (although the time was not come for a full manifestation of the truth of his Godhead, and therefore he uses a sort of parable in action to indicate it,) that "none can forgive sins but God only;" but that the working of a miracle of healing by his own original and essential power was the proof of his Divinity, and of his consequent authority to forgive sins. Then in their presence he commands the man to *arise, take up his bed*, the light portable mattress on which he had been brought, *and walk*; thus demonstrating his Divine authority to forgive sins, by his omnipotence to heal diseases. To this demonstration was added, in the present case, Christ's knowledge of their *thoughts* and secret *reasonings*;—*and Jesus knew their* THOUGHTS. But wherever pride and prejudice possess the heart, the clearest proofs either pass unnoticed, or they are quickly forgotten. Yet this knowledge of the thoughts of the heart ought to have commended Christ to the scribes, since one of their rules for trying the Messiah when he should appear, was his power to discover the hearts of men. Hence in subsequent times they objected the want of this quality to the false messiah Barchochebas. "Bar Cozeba," says the Talmud, "reigned two years and a half. He said to the rabbins, 'I am the Messiah.' They replied, 'It is written of Messiah, that he is of quick understanding, and judges; Isaiah xi, 3: let us see whether this man can tell whether one is wicked, or not, without any external proof.' And when they saw that he could not judge in this manner, they slew him." That our Lord knew the thoughts of the objectors on this occasion, and that they gave no outward indication of them by words or signs, is clear from the narrative,—*Then certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*

Verse 8. *Glorified God, which had given*

marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

9 ¶ [b] And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye and learn what *that*

[b] Mark ii, 14; Luke v, 27.

such power unto men.—They acknowledged the *power* of healing, but they still thought it a *derived*, and not an *original* one. The mystery of "Emanuel, God with us," was not yet, *doctrinally*, fully declared, but was left to be inferred from the actions of our Lord, and the occasional allusions to his superior nature, which occurred in his discourses. See the note on Mark ii, 3.

Verse 9. *Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom.*—The other evangelists call him Levi, so that he had two names, and was called by either, indifferently; as Simon Peter is sometimes simply called Simon, and sometimes Peter.

At the receipt of custom.—The τελωνιον, or custom house, or collector's booth; for such buildings were erected at the foot of bridges, the mouths of rivers, in towns, and at the landing places along the seashore, where the publicans, that class of them called *portitores*, received the imposts on passengers and goods. Matthew was thus employed when he received his call to *follow* Christ; that is, to give himself wholly up to follow him, renouncing all secular concerns, in order to be employed in a spiritual work. He had probably been a disciple previously, but he now received his *ministerial call*. The promptitude of his obedience is to be remarked; and especially, knowing as he did, that the call implied the entire sacrifice of worldly gain. He was a publican, and probably, like others of that race, had been sufficiently ardent in the pursuit of wealth; now grace triumphs over the habits of the man, and he leaves all to follow Christ, and to embrace a life of poverty and persecution.

Verses 10, 11. *As Jesus sat at meat in the house, &c.*—That is, the house of Matthew, who, as St. Luke informs us, had made "a great feast" for the entertainment of Christ and his disciples, to which he invited many of his fellow publicans, that they might have the opportunity of hearing his conversation. This appears to have been done very publicly; for *when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto the disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?* for as the publicans were regarded as unclean and unholy persons, no Jew professing sanctity would eat with them, or indeed with the common people.—With them it was a mark of holiness to maintain a haughty distance and separation from sinners; saying tacitly, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." Christ often exposes this hypocrisy; and teaches us by his example that if we have superior knowledge and superior holiness, we are compassionately to employ both for the benefit of mankind. The "sinners" usually mentioned with the publicans were not Gentiles, but those Jews who pursued what were thought unlawful callings, as publicans, usurers, feeders of swine, &c., or were notorious for vicious conduct: these were put upon the same level in public estimation as the αλλοφυλους, or Gentiles, whom they called sinners by way of eminence.

Verse 12. *They that be whole need not a physician.*—These words conveyed a sharp reproof to the Pharisees. A teacher of the law was, according to their sayings, "a physician of the soul." "If then," as though Christ had said, "this is your profession, if you even boast of your superior skill in the law and the way of salvation, where ought the physician to be but among *the sick?* since *the whole* have no need of him." On this ground our Lord justifies himself. He was indeed the great, the true, the infallible Physician, ιατρος κακων, *a healer of wounds;* των της ψυχης παθων αριστος ιατρος, *the best Physician of the diseases of the soul*, as Philo says of the Divine Logos; and where should he be busied but among those whose cases most called for his compassion and most needed his skill? Such were the publicans and reputed sinners; not indeed that they were in a worse moral condition than the Pharisees, but they were more sensible of their case, more ready to acknowledge their spiritual maladies, and more willing to observe the prescribed rules of cure. He had gained one soul from among the publicans of Capernaum, in whose house he was then eating bread; and he might win many others.

Verse 13. *But go ye and learn what that meaneth.*—Go and learn τι εστιν, *what that is*, a phrase used by the Jews when they were about to explain a text of Scripture, and draw an argument from it, study it, and get out its sense. The passage referred to is Hosea vi, 6: "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than

meaneth, [c] I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, [d] but sinners to repentance.

14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, [e] Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

16 No man putteth a piece of * new

[c] Hosea vi, 6; Matt. xii, 7.—[d] 1 Tim. i, 15.—[e] Mark ii, 18; Luke v, 33.—* Or, *raw*, or, *unwrought cloth*.

burnt-offerings." Christ quotes only the former part, as being sufficient for his purpose; but the latter clause shows that the former was to be taken comparatively. God had appointed sacrifice; but when mercy and sacrifice could not both be performed, then sacrifice must give place to mercy—positive institutions to moral duties. The sense of the passage is well given in the Chaldee paraphrase: "For in those that exercise mercy is my delight, more than in sacrifice." The argument of our Lord is, therefore,—If even the appointed sacrifices of the law may give place to the superior claims of mercy, much less can your vain traditions, as to the holiness and unholiness of persons, be pleaded against the exercise of the greatest mercy; mercy to the souls of men perishing in their sins; and in thus caring for their immortal interests, I do that which is more acceptable to God than all the minute ritual observances on which you pride yourselves and despise others.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—Some suppose our Lord to speak of the few truly righteous persons who were living in Judea; persons who, like Simeon, Anna, and others, were "waiting for the redemption by the Messiah;" but this is scarcely apposite to his design. He had to justify himself for rather seeking the society of the common people, "the publicans and the sinners," than that of the great professors of sanctity. That the latter needed repentance is certain, as well as that our Lord, by his general preaching, called all to repentance, the Pharisees as well as others; but knowing their character, and the hopelessness of their case, he did not give his principal labours to them; they were encased in pride, hypocrisy, and self-esteem; they had cultivated religious delusions until they had become infatuated by them; and he turns, therefore, from them to the more simple-minded, to sinners, it is true, but men who had not been taught by a guilty sophistry to give to vice the character of virtue, and to feed a false confidence with forms of external sanctity and exactness of ritual observance. Euthymius has well conceived the sense of the passage: "I came not to call you Pharisees, who fancy yourselves righteous, but those who acknowledge themselves sinners, and seek a method of expiation."

Verses 14, 15. *But thy disciples fast not.*—Those who were reputed the most holy men among the Jews carried fasting to excess. These fasts were not, however, the public fasts, enjoined by the law, but those which the head of any school might enjoin upon his disciples, or any individual appoint for himself as a branch of moral discipline. The Pharisees fasted twice a week; but beside these fasts innumerable occasions were thought to call for the practice of this duty. The disciples of John practised this kind of austerity, and, as it would seem from the question proposed, as frequently as the Pharisees; and they appear to have been offended that the same mortification did not distinguish the followers of Christ. John himself was now in prison; and as from him they could obtain no information on this point, they came to Jesus, probably supposing that he would bind this duty more strictly upon his followers. Our Lord's answer probably indicates, that John's disciples had multiplied their fasts since their master had been imprisoned; and his reply is, that though their afflicted and bereaved state might justify their fasting, yet no such necessity was yet laid upon his disciples, their Master being still with them. *But*, he adds, *the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.* The children of the bedchamber, *οι υιοι του νυμφωνος*, the sons of the bridechamber, or perhaps *του νυμφιου*, as some versions have it, the sons, or friends of the bridegroom, were those who formed a part of the marriage procession, and were admitted to the festivities which followed. Images, to express seasons of rejoicing, are constantly drawn by ancient writers from marriage feasts. *Νυμφιου βιος*, "the life of a bridegroom," is a Greek proverb for feasting. To these friends of the bridegroom our Lord compares his disciples. While he remained with them it was a period of great rejoicing, as appears from the sorrow they manifested when they had the first intimation of their Master being taken from them. To such a season frequent fasting, as implying mourning would have been obviously unfit; and the Jews would well understand the force of his reply, because it was a maxim with them to relax their rules of fasting, and other strict ceremonial services, in favour of those who were engaged in attending marriages. But

cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

18 ¶ [f] While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

[f] Mark v, 22; Luke viii, 41.

after Christ's departure from them, then he intimates seasons of mourning and persecution should come, either rendering fasting proper, as a religious act, or obliging them to fast, in the sense of suffering hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake; to the latter of which, also, our Lord may refer, and perhaps principally. Thus, St. Paul puts it among his sufferings, that he was "in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Verses 16, 17. *New cloth,—new wine.*—The argument is, that his disciples were not yet trained up to a severe discipline; which renders it probable that by their future fasting, in the preceding verse, he speaks figuratively of their various persecutions, and the sorrows consequent upon them. For if he spoke of fasting literally, what reason could be given why the disciples of Christ should not be able to fast, even to austerity, as well as the disciples of John, who were probably taken out of the same classes of society? Some, indeed, have supposed that these disciples of John were of the sect of the Essenes, who, as well as the Pharisees, were severely trained to fasting; but this is a mere conjecture, for which no evidence appears. Christ rather takes occasion, from this interlocution of the disciples of the Baptist, to show that, as a tender Master, he gradually trained up his disciples to endure hardships "as good soldiers," by not placing them in the outset in circumstances of such formidable trial as might have been injurious to them; and it appears that through the whole time of his ministry and continuance with them, they were exposed to no serious persecutions, not even "scourging in the synagogues."—The *new cloth* has been rendered *unfulled*, or *undressed cloth*, *αγναφος*, for the sake of heightening the idea of harshness or rigidity, and so accounting for such a piece of cloth sewed to or upon an old garment making the rent worse. This is somewhat hypercritical, as the word by implication means simply *new;* and any piece of strong, new cloth sewed to an old and tender garment would be likely to make the rent worse. The *bottles* here mentioned were made of skins. These skin bottles were used by the people of the east to preserve their water on journeys, their milk, wine, and other liquids; and from Homer it appears they were also in use among the Greeks at the siege of Troy. They are still used in Spain, and are called barrachas. New bottles of this kind were stronger than those which had been some time in use, and were, therefore, more fit for new wine, which was apt to ferment; while old wine, having passed the state of fermentation, might be put into old and weaker skins. These sayings of Christ have the character and form of proverbs; they are maxims of concentrated practical wisdom, adapted for instruction in cases beside that to which they were first applied. In the religious education of children, in dealing with new converts, and in having regard to the different habits and prejudices of men in general, we must have respect to the strength of the bottle and the quality of the wine we put into it. All things should be suited to persons and to circumstances; and greater care is often necessary in attempting to do good, than in abstaining from injury.

Verse 18. *A certain ruler.*—He was the ruler of one of the synagogues at Capernaum, and his office was to preside over the assembly, and direct the worship. He would also be one of the council or court of three. For the courts of judicature among the Jews were the great sanhedrim of seventy-one at Jerusalem; the lesser council of twenty-three judges in the larger cities; and in the smaller towns a court of three judges, which appertained to the synagogue. A synagogue was not formed, except where there were "ten men of leisure;" men read in the law, who were the elders of the synagogue: from these the judges of the court of three were to be selected. These were collectively called *αρχισυναγωγοι*, rulers of the synagogue; though this title was given by way of eminence to the president, who also presided over the synagogue worship. The ruler and judge of one of these synagogues now applies to Christ; and though, being a resident in Capernaum, he knew the poverty in which our Lord lived, yet he comes publicly and *worships him*, that is, pays him the most profound reverence as a superior; and though he had left his daughter dying, and believed that she had already expired, yet such is his faith, that he doubted not that Christ could raise her to life.

My daughter is even now dead.—Luke in-

20 ¶ And, behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

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forms us she was his "only daughter;" Mark calls her his "little daughter." According to the Jewish rule, a daughter, until twelve years of age, is called "a little one," and at twelve years and a day she is called a young woman. When the father left the house she was, as it is expressed in Luke, "a dying," and the words *αρτι ετελευτησεν* ought to have been rendered, not *is even now dead*, but, *is even now dying*, at this very moment; or, *she is by this time dead*, which appears to have been his persuasion, and indeed proved to be the fact.

Verse 20. *And, behold, a woman which was diseased, &c.*—This occurred in the street of Capernaum, or in the immediate vicinity, while Jesus was going from the house of Matthew to the house of the ruler. The Jews were commanded, throughout all their generations, to wear a fringe and a riband of blue at the bottom of their robe, as a mark to distinguish them from other people. This is what our version has translated "*the hem.*" The Pharisees greatly enlarged the size of this fringe or hem on their robes, as intending to declare themselves still more distinguished than the common Jews for their regard to the laws of their nation. Our Lord, no doubt, wore his of the customary size. It is an absurd notion of some commentators, that this woman touched the hem or edge of his garment, under the idea that, like the showy fringes of the Pharisees, it had some particular sanctity. To touch the hem of the garment was an act of reverence; here it was also an act of extraordinary faith; not that she thought that there was any virtue in the garment of our Saviour, but it pleased him to heal many by touching him, as stated, Luke vi, 19; and she had probably heard of that fact, and having the strongest faith in the power and compassion of Christ, she touches his garment too, not as though that had virtue, but as knowing that to all to whom he willed that grace the power flowed forth from himself. The disease of the woman rendered her unclean by the law, Lev. xv, 25, and doomed her to keep separate from all others; and the delicacy of her complaint prevented her from making a declaration of her case. In these painful circumstances, she had no other resource than to approach secretly and silently, casting herself by a strong faith upon Christ's knowledge of the thoughts of her heart, as well as upon his power and mercy. And she was dealt with in great tenderness. After what would appear, in an unclean person, not only an act of rudeness, but, according to all Jewish notions, of great criminality, to touch any one, and much more a superior, she might well for the moment be greatly agitated; but every feeling of this kind was assuaged by the words of Christ, *Daughter, be of good comfort*, or courage; and her faith was honoured by the perfect cure of an inveterate malady, upon which human skill had been often exerted in vain. See note on Mark v, 25.

Verse 23. *The minstrels and the people making a noise.*—Anciently the Jews simply bewailed the dead for a number of days.—Music, as here, was introduced in later times from the heathens, with whom it was common. The "minstrels," *αυλητα*, were players on a kind of pipe; and their office appears to have been to lead the funeral dirge which was sung by vocal performers. This was "the noise" the people were making when our Lord arrived, and there were doubtless many of them; for a poor man when his wife died "had not less," says Maimonides, "than two pipes, and one mourning woman." The opulent, of course, employed a large number. Expensive follies have thus in all ages been indulged at funerals.

Verse 24. *He saith unto them, Give place, &c.*—"This," says Dr. Donne, "was not because he disallowed those funeral solemnities; but because he knew that there was to be no funeral solemnized." The reason for his excluding them was probably both because he disapproved of a Gentile custom, and because he chose that other and more credible persons than these vagrant hirelings should be the witnesses of the miracle. The persons he allowed to be present were, as appears from St. Mark's account, Peter, James, and John, with the father and mother of the deceased.

The maid is not dead, but sleepeth.—Here, as in many other cases, our Lord uses terms in a figurative sense, and therefore enigmatically. The hireling mourners, understanding him literally, "laughed him to scorn," by which they unconsciously strengthened the evidence of the truth of the miracle,

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And * the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*.

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 ¶ ε As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

* Or, *this fame*.

ε Luke xi, 14.

by attesting the reality of the maid's death. Our Lord obviously meant that she was not finally and hopelessly dead, and that, with reference to her being so soon awakened to life, she might be said to *sleep*. To sleep, indeed, is a common euphemism for death, and in Scripture generally implies a reference to the resurrection; with still greater propriety, therefore, might it be used of cases of miraculous restoration to life, as here and in the instance of Lazarus.

Verse 26. *And the fame thereof went abroad into all that land.*—It spread rapidly, for it was the first instance in which our Lord had raised the dead to life; and so notable a miracle, implying his possessing the very fulness of the Divine power, could not but make a powerful impression. Here the person had recently departed; in the case of the widow's son, he was in the act of being carried to his grave; and in the instance of Lazarus the corpse had lain in the grave, and had become corrupt. But what can withstand the life-giving energy of the Son of God? Not the deeper death of the soul of man can resist his power. Of how many myriads may it be said, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins!" These miracles are not only glorious attestations of his mission and Divinity, but teach us to look up to him as the great fountain of spiritual life.

Verse 27–31. *Two blind men followed him, &c.*—He permitted them to follow him through the streets of Capernaum from the house of Jairus to his own, or that of Matthew, which he had left, in order to try their faith, and that they might be a testimony against the inhabitants, who, it appears, generally rejected him, by proclaiming him through the streets as the "son of David," one of the most usual designations of Messiah. In the house, and not till then, he healed them, on profession of their faith in his power, which, in such case, seems always to have implied the belief that he was the Messiah, and not a mere ordinary prophet, and for that reason, among others, to have been required. But he *straitly*, that is, earnestly, *charged them, See that no man know it*. The charge was strict; but not, as many translators have taken it, harsh and minatory, making our Lord act and speak in a threatening character, quite out of keeping with the occasion and his usual manner; for, as Campbell observes, "the Syriac translator, who better understood the oriental idiom, renders the Greek verb by a word which implies simply, *he forbade, he prohibited*." He had already wrought sufficient miracles in Capernaum to convince those who sincerely desired to know the truth, and greater publicity could only have produced a malicious resentment in those whose state of heart had indisposed them to be influenced by the clearest evidence. He might wish also to repress the popular feeling in his favour, which might have led them to proclaim him as their civil prince, according to their mistaken views of the Messiah, when he should be fully manifested. In the excess of their feelings these men restored to sight disobeyed the injunction; but the knowledge of the fact that he had forbidden them to publish the miracle might lead the people to think that the time for manifesting himself in that exalted, regal character in which they expected he would invest himself was not fully come, and therefore the end of the injunction was not frustrated.

Verses 32, 33. *They brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil, &c.*—He was dumb in consequence of the possession; for they who argue from the circumstance, that the demoniacs of the Gospel were often afflicted with other diseases, that the possessions themselves are only to be understood of these maladies, according to a superstitious mode of speaking, forget that even the Jews did not say of every dumb man, nor of every insane and epileptic man, that he had a devil. Those were particular cases only, in which the disease and the possession are distinctly mentioned, and the former was manifestly the consequence of the latter. Some were possessed who do not appear to

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, [h] He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 [i] And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 ¶ [k] But when he saw the multi-

[h] Matt. xii, 24; Mark iii, 22; Luke xi, 15.

[i] Mark vi, 6; Luke xiii, 22.—[k] Mark vi, 34.

have had any particular disease, as Mary Magdalene; others had maladies induced by diabolical agency; and a third class might have their infirmities exasperated. When, therefore, it was said reproachfully, "Thou hast a devil, and art mad," the meaning was, not that in their view madness and possession were the same thing, but that in his case both occurred; for all madness they certainly did not attribute to possession, any more than all cases of dumbness. In the case of the text, possession had been manifested by its peculiar indications, and the dumbness was one of the corporeal effects; hence, as soon as the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke.

Verse 33. *The multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.*—This was not a hyperbolical exclamation; for when had such a number of miracles, so great and so affectingly beneficent, been performed in a few hours?—the curing of the profluvious woman, the raising the daughter of Jairus to life, the restoration of sight to two blind men, and the ejection of an evil spirit, in the course of one afternoon! To which Jesus immediately added many more; for it is added, "*he went about all their cities teaching, &c., and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*"

Verse 34. *He casteth out devils through the prince of devils.*—This was said upon the cure of the dumb demoniac just mentioned, from which it would appear that the Pharisees of Capernaum first invented this hypothesis, to excuse their unbelief, and pervert the people; or, according to others, the whole case may have been deliberated upon by the Pharisees of Jerusalem, and the sect everywhere have been instructed to apply this solution to those instances of clear and unequivocal miracles, the occurrence of which could not be denied. It will be seen in the sequel how our Lord refuted this blasphemy against the Spirit of God. Here it is sufficient to remark that those who were bent upon rejecting Christ and his doctrine were obliged either to give up their opposition, or to take refuge in some theory, however absurd, to account for the miraculous evidences of it. This is the constant resort of unyielding pride and determined infidelity to this day. Yet even this was overruled for the benefit of future times. The very objection so often repeated, and by the Pharisees generally urged, admitted the facts of the miracles. It followed also from the very view of the case they so perversely took, that the conduct of Christ in performing his mighty works, and the nature of the works themselves, were subjected to the severest scrutiny of his fiercest enemies, who yet were obliged to admit a supernatural cause, though they wickedly brought in the agency of Satan. Unmoved by these reproaches, this base ingratitude of returning evil for good, our blessed Lord makes his second tour of Galilee, preaching "the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every manner of sickness;" thus, says Bishop Horne, "leaving behind him, wherever he went, the warmth of a fervent charity, the light of evangelical truth, and the fragrance of a good report of something done for the benefit of man and the glory of God."

Verse 36. *He was moved with compassion on them.*—This is perhaps better than Campbell's translation, which is simply "he had compassion on them," though there is great truth in his remark, "that critics often hunt after imaginary emphasis, through the obscure mazes of etymology." The word comes from *σπλαγχνον*, used in the New Testament only in the plural, *τασπλαγχνα*, which signifies the chief intestines, the heart, liver, &c.; and as the heart was considered the seat of the kind affections, so the word is used for *compassion, love, mercy*. It is, however, employed when no particular emphasis is intended; so that we are to collect the degree of the emotion rather from the circumstances of the case or in some adjunct, than from etymology. Here it is evident that our Lord was influenced by a strong emotion of compassion, as the whole passage shows. He viewed the multitudes that followed him as sheep neglected by their shepherds, the false and vain and worldly Jewish teachers, and therefore *εκλελυμενοι*, or as Griesbach reads, *εσκυλμενοι, exhausted* by fruitless wanderings in search of food, and *ερριμμενοι, scattered*, and therefore *exposed* to every danger. In these figurative expressions he manifestly refers to the spiritual condition of these eager multitudes, not to their being faint and dispersed through the fatigue of following him, an interpretation which destroys all the force of the context. The body of the people had been kept in ig-

tudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they * fainted, and were scattered abroad, [l] as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, [m] The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

* Or, *were tired and lay down.*

[l] Num. xxvii, 17.—[m] Luke x. 2.

norance, or had only been taught great errors; yet they had hung upon his lips, heard with interest and astonishment his heavenly doctrine, and glorified God on account of his miraculous works, instead of ascribing them like the Pharisees to Satanic agency. Here then was a hopeful prospect among a population utterly neglected by their pretended *shepherds*, fainting for want of true spiritual food, and *exposed* to danger because "no man cared for their souls." These were the considerations which awoke the strong and melting compassions of the Son of God; and he turns therefore to his disciples, and in equally beautiful and impressive figurative language, drawn from another source, addresses them, and engages their prayers in their behalf: *the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye, therefore, &c.* The numerous ears of corn standing thick in the fields represent the multitudes destitute of instruction, yet ripe for it; and the *labourers* ἐργάται, *the reapers*, are diligent ministers who gather in the harvest into the garner of the Church: *the Lord of the harvest* is God himself, who alone has the power to send forth such labourers; to displace them when remiss and to send others; and without whose authority and commission every man is but a busy and mischievous intruder: and the *sending forth* the labourers indicates the constraining "necessity" which is laid upon them to urge them to their task; for though the word is sometimes used, as John x, 4, with no idea of coaction, yet it has usually a strong sense, and may justify some of our earlier versions, which render it "that he will THRUST forth labourers into his harvest;" that is, by his powerful influence upon them, awakening their zeal and inflaming their charity. Authority and efficacy are thus implied on the part of the master; a deep sense of the importance of the work and of their unworthiness and unfitness for it, on the part of the servants. It is under such moving views that we are taught still to regard the destitute portions of mankind; and for the increase of true labourers we ought always to be directing our prayers to the "Lord of the harvest," recognizing his authority, but also appealing to his merciful purposes as to our race at large. Very strikingly connected are this exhortation of our blessed Lord, and his own proceeding, in the solemn appointment of his apostles, as recorded in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Christ sendeth out his twelve apostles, enabling them with power to do miracles,* 5 *giveth them their charge, teacheth them,* 16 *comforteth them against persecutions:* 40 *and promiseth a blessing to those that receive them.*

1 AND [a] when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power * *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apos-

[a] Mark iii, 15; Luke ix, 1.

* Or, *over.*

CHAPTER X. Verse 1. *Twelve disciples.*—They had before followed him under the character of *disciples;* but were now expressly made APOSTLES. The word signifies *a messenger*, any one *sent* by another for any purpose whatever. In Herodotus it signifies *a herald;* and in a still higher sense it is used, like the Hebrew שלוח, for *legate* or *ambassador.* It is a word of dignity, but only according to the character of the sender, the message, and the person sent. In the highest sense it is applied to Christ himself, who is the "Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" in the next degree it is given to the twelve apostles of Christ, to whom St. Paul was afterward added; then, in 2 Cor. viii, 23, Titus and other brethren are called "apostles of the Churches," where it is rendered "messengers" in our translation.—"The apostles of Christ," and "the apostles of the Lamb," are phrases which seem not to have been used but with reference to "THE TWELVE" and ST. PAUL. Some, indeed, think that the title was, in its higher

tles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

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sense, applied also to Barnabas and other distinguished founders of the Christian faith; but this does not so clearly appear. Many fancies have been built upon the number of apostles being limited to twelve, and allusions have been found in the circumstance to the twelve patriarchs, the twelve spies, the twelve stones in Aaron's breastplate, the twelve fountains found by the Israelites in the wilderness, the twelve oxen which supported Solomon's molten laver, &c., &c., for all of which plausible or absurd reasons have been given; but the best use to be made of such speculations is to teach us the necessity of interpreting Scripture with sobriety; for the whole charm of such discoveries of mysteries in the number twelve is dissipated when we recollect that in fact, after St. Paul was called, the number of the apostles of equal rank and dignity, by whom the foundations of the Christian Church were laid, was not *twelve* but *thirteen*. If any reason at all can be assigned for the number of twelve being first fixed upon, it appears to have been with reference to their being first sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," to prepare a spiritual Israel for Christ, before the formal calling of the Gentiles.—Their number was therefore that of the twelve tribes, who were mingled in one population after the return from the captivity, the genealogies of Levi and Judah only being preserved with much care with reference to the priesthood and the Messiah. But when the Gentiles were to be called, one was added to the number, not to exclude the rest from ministering to the Gentiles, but to give a strong sanction to the doctrine of the equality of believing Gentiles and believing Jews, with which St. Paul was specially charged.

He gave them power, &c.—This is the grand distinction between the miraculous powers of Christ and those of his apostles. The one was inherent in himself, the other was expressly communicated by him, and was never employed but as *his power*, not as theirs who exercised it. The distinction, before noticed, will here again be remarked between "CASTING OUT unclean spirits, and HEALING all manner of sickness;" so that possession is excluded expressly from the class of sicknesses and diseases.

Verse 2. *Now the names of the twelve apostles.*—The order in which some of these became disciples may be thus collected from the different gospels. Andrew, Peter's brother, and John, having been disciples of the Baptist, first joined themselves to Christ; then Andrew fetched his brother Peter, and spent the rest of the day with our Lord.—The next day Philip was called, and Nathanael, generally supposed to be Bartholomew. But these returned to their occupations, and when the call was given, which implied that they were to give up themselves wholly to be trained to the ministration of his doctrine, Peter was first called, (see Luke v, 3–10,) then James and John, and probably Andrew at the same time. The call of Matthew is also distinctly related; but of the special calling of the others we have no account, save that the whole twelve are here enumerated together. The catalogues are not formed with reference to rank and dignity, but to order only; for if rank had been implied, the catalogues would have exactly agreed in the gospels and the Acts; yet Peter is in them all named *first*, and Judas Iscariot last; Peter as having been, in fact, first called to the office of the ministry, as noticed above, while Judas is very naturally put last as the traitor, unless indeed he was the last called.

Peter.—To Simon the name of Peter was given, in Syriac *Cephos*, in Greek Πέτρος, from πέτρα a *stone*, the first main stone laid upon the foundation corner stone, which is Christ himself, who is also the top corner stone, or "head of the corner."

Verse 3. *James the son of Alphæus.*—To distinguish him from James the brother of John, both the sons of Zebedee. Alphæus is from חלפי, which is pronounced Alpha, or Cleophi; hence this Alpheus is called Cleopas, Luke xxiv, 18.

Lebbæus whose surname was Thaddæus.—Judas, or Jude, was called Lebbæus, from Lebba, a town in Galilee, to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot. Judas, in Syriac, is Thaddai.

Verse 4. *Simon the Canaanite.*—From the Hebrew קנא, *zeal*, whence St. Luke calls him, by interpretation, "Simon Zelotes;" a name given to him, as some thought, for his zeal and piety, but others, from his having belonged to a sect called Zealots, because of their zeal for the law, and their instant execution of it, without waiting for authority.—This was called "the judgment of zeal."—But it is doubtful whether this sect appeared so long before the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, when their fanatical zeal is specially recorded by Josephus. Certainly he was not a Canaanite, in the sense of being a descendant of Canaan.

Judas Iscariot.—The town of Carioth, in

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 [b] But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, [c] The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[b] Acts xiii, 46.

[c] Luke x, 9.

Judah, is the most probable derivation of the cognomen of the traitor.

Men more influential for their rank, and more eminent for learning, our Lord might have called. Centurions and rulers of synagogues had believed on him, and Nicodemus, a Jewish doctor, at an early period, became his disciple; but the whole work was to be manifestly of God, and it was to be demonstrated as much above the reach of human wisdom to plan, as of human influence to promote. "Plain integrity," says one very justly, "and honest simplicity, were the qualifications which Christ sought; and he found them more easily in the fishing vessels of the sea of Galilee, than in the banqueting rooms or splendid houses on the shore." In fact, all that was in the first instance wanted was men of character, to state facts; men of simplicity, to report the doctrines they had been taught, and as they had been delivered to them; and men of holy courage, willing to suffer and to die for the truth. When languages were wanted, they received them by special gift; and when they were called to dispute, "a mouth and wisdom" were given to them for the occasion. Thus they were kept immediately dependent upon their Master, even after he had ascended to heaven, unbiassed by the speculative taste which all the learning of that day tended to form; and they were thereby the fitter channels through which to convey the water of life in the same purity with which it had issued from the FOUNTAIN itself. One, indeed, and but one, proved false; but, happily for the world, he betrayed his Master before he could betray his cause, to the establishment of which his treachery was made signally subservient.

Verse 5. *Way of the Gentiles, &c.*—That the apostles on this mission were forbidden to go to Gentile nations or among the Samaritans, in deference to the prejudices of the Jews, or in the least degree to give sanction to their notions of superiority over the heathens or semi-heathens, with whom they were surrounded, is a very unfounded notion, and is wholly inconsistent with that spirit of charity and kindness to the whole world which so often breaks forth in the discourses of our Lord himself. This mission of the twelve, as appears by the foregoing chapter, proceeded from Christ's deeply excited compassion for the neglected and perishing condition of the Jewish people; so that their degradation and misery, not their fancied superiority, were implied in it. Christ, indeed, was sent first and principally to the Jews, and so were his apostles; and the reason was obvious.—Christianity was to be built upon the foundation of the Old Testament, as the same dispensation perfected. No other people had been placed in such a course of training to receive it; and either the Jews, who held the prophecies of this new dispensation, and certain principles common both to the new and to the old, must be convinced of the truth of Christ's claims and doctrines, or be reasonably silenced by appeals to what they held sacred, before Christianity could be proposed to any distant nation with hope of success. The kind affection of our Lord to his country—for among his other illustrious human virtues he has shown us what a pure and ardent patriotism really is—would impel him to seek first the salvation of his own people; but the design was higher than this. The Gospel system had been yet but imperfectly announced, and indeed was incomplete as wanting the facts of the great sacrifice, the resurrection, the ascension, and the priesthood of its Founder, by all which, many important prophecies were yet to be accomplished; and the time, therefore, was not come for its being propounded to Gentile nations, who did not admit the preliminary and preparatory dispensation of the Old Testament. Yet before Christianity received its perfect form, and was stamped by the hand of its Divine Author with its final seal, an opportunity for effecting great good presented itself among the Jews. John the Baptist had, by his preaching, produced a great impression upon the people, and led them to expect the immediate appearance of Messiah: now, the office of the apostles, to be sent forth in different directions, was to declare that Jesus was that Messiah; to work miracles in his name, in order to prove it; to relate his mighty works; and, no doubt, to repeat his sayings and discourses; thus calling forth prayer, and incipient faith, and spiritual desires, and disposing many at least to receive the Gospel when it should, in its complete form and its fulness of evidence, be proposed to them; for the subject of their preaching was to be, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Great immediate good was to be done, and the seed of a large future harvest was sown. Nor are we to understand the prohibition of our Lord so strictly as to suppose that the Gentiles who mingled with the Jews, many of whom were either proselytes or well affected to many truths in the Jewish religion, or that the Samaritans

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 [d] *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither

[d] Mark vi, 8; Luke ix, 3; xxii, 35.

* Or, *get.*

they might meet with, were to be wholly neglected. Christ himself did not despise this class of men, though he too was sent, as he sent his apostles, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," that is, chiefly and principally. "The WAY of the Gentiles" means the road leading to the Gentile nations; therefore they were not to go to the Gentiles as nations; and into any CITY of the Samaritans they were not to enter, that is, to fulfil their mission. These were to be visited in the fulness of time. But many individual Gentiles in Judea were as well prepared, by their previous knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, to receive benefit from their mission as the Jews, and probably many individual Samaritans also, as their Master himself had found.

Verse 8. *Raise the dead.*—Because we have no account of the apostles raising the dead before the ascension of Christ, it has been contended that these words have been interpolated; in favour of which, it is pleaded that they are not found in several MSS. and versions. They are, however, found in the Vulgate, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, and in the Cambr. and Alex. MSS., and in several of the fathers; nor for such an interpolation can any good reason be conjectured. The allegation that the twelve apostles, during this their first mission, raised no dead to life, or it is thought the fact would have been mentioned, proves nothing; for neither do we read that they "cleansed any lepers, and yet that power is expressly committed to them. It may, however, be granted that they did not, *at that time*, raise any dead to life; yet to argue from this against the clause in the text entirely overlooks one of the main circumstances connected with the exercise of these powers; that they were not to be wielded at the judgment and discretion of man. The occasions for their exercise were presented to them by a special providence, and the powers were to be exercised on consideration, prayer, and looking up to God for intimations of his will. It could never be intended that they should raise all the dead to life, whom they might meet on their journey, carried out for burial. Our Lord did not thus use his power, as they well knew; but that when it should seem to be for the glory of God, and when they were under the impulse of that superior power by which alone the attempt could be effectual. No such occasions might or probably did occur on this journey; but that power was with them which was adequate to the case, had the wisdom of God so appointed; and it continued with them through their whole apostolic life, but still subject to be exerted only under special impulses. It is farther to be observed, that the discourse is not to be considered as applicable only to their first limited apostolical journey, although that was the occasion which called it forth. See note on verse 17.

Freely ye have received, &c.—They were to receive no money, no compensation, but the bare support afforded by a free hospitality; although, when they healed diseases, the gratitude of many might offer them considerable gifts. They were to be decently supported in their work; and this was to be the standing rule of future times as to ministers, and its limit; but whether this support was to be given in kind or money, circumstances may determine. The intention of the rule is to prohibit making a gain of godliness, and to prevent the ministry from being regarded as a lucrative profession. They were therefore to go forth in full dependence upon Providence, and, under that, the good will of well disposed men. No money was to be taken in their *purses*, εις τας ζωνας, *girdles*, which the orientals and even Romans used as purses. Nor were they to take a *scrip*, πηρα, the bag in which travellers carried provisions from stage to stage; nor *two coats*, χιτωνας, *vests* or *tunics*; nor *shoes*, υποδηματα, which some distinguish from sandals. They were, however, originally the same, although, in a later age, the shoe was a covering for the whole foot, as distinguished from σανδαλιον, which defended only the sole. The meaning certainly was, not that they should go barefoot, as some have understood it, any more than that they should go without coats; but that they should not take two pair of sandals, as they were not to take *two coats, nor yet staves.* St. Mark says, "save a staff only," which shows that one was permitted. Two staves were therefore prohibited, as two coats and two pair of sandals: should, therefore, their staff be broken or lost, they were to look to the kindness of those to whom they preached to furnish them with this part of the necessary equipment of an eastern traveller, as well as for a supply of sandals and coats when needed; so absolute was to be their trust in God, so free were they to keep themselves from those anxieties which superfluity always brings with it; and yet such care was taken to remind the people of the duty of a liberal hospitality to guests sent by such a Master and on such an errand, that they might want nothing necessary to health and comfort, when it was seen that their necessities called for supplies; for,

two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: [e] for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 [f] And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into a house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 [g] And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, [h] shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

[e] 1 Tim. v, 18; Luke x, 7.—[f] Luke x, 8.

[g] Mark vi, 11.—[h] Acts xiii, 51.

adds our Lord, *the labourer is worthy of his meat*, της τροφης, of his *maintenance*, including here all necessaries, but not money.—Michaelis, who holds that Matthew's gospel was first written in Hebrew, conjectures, that before the words shoes and staves, stood אלא, "except only;" it would then be read, that the disciples were to take nothing with them but shoes and staves; but the sense does not require this conjectural amendment; and the notion of a Hebrew original is exceedingly doubtful. See the introduction.

Verse 11. *Worthy.*—Not PIOUS, as some suppose; for of whom were the apostles to obtain their information, but from those they might casually meet, persons who would generally direct them to the highest professors of the piety most popular in that day; the ostentatious Pharisees, who were the most likely persons to reject them? But by the "worthy," are probably meant liberal and bountiful persons, well known for practising hospitality to strangers, which was generally a good indication of moral worth, though not an infallible one; and our Lord prepares them for disappointment in some instances, even from persons who had this good report.

There abide.—They were not to go from house to house through fickleness of temper, or show that they could not bear with the infirmities of those by whom they were entertained, should they be exercised with this trial of meekness; or that they were discontented with the accommodations afforded them. If, upon the whole, their entertainers were willing to receive them, and out of respect to their message, they were to show themselves indifferent to all inferior considerations, and to practise humility, patience, and self-denial.

Verse 12. *Salute it.*—That is, the household, the family. What the salutation was we learn from St. Luke: "Peace be to this house;" which indeed is added here in the Vulgate, *Pax huic domui.* Peace signifies every kind of felicity. "Great is peace," say the rabbins; "for all other blessings are comprehended in it."

Verse 13. *But if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*—If you are rejected out of hatred to your Master and his message, your office and your work, *let your peace* return; that is, it shall return, the imperative being used for the prophetic future: they were to withdraw a benediction which could only be pronounced in Christ's name; and he engages to ratify their act. This is a proof that more than the ordinary salutations are here intended; for our Lord was not teaching his apostles the common forms of civility, which they well enough understood. *Let your peace* RETURN *to you*, is a Hebraism. Thus it is said of God's word, that it "would return to him void," on the supposition that it failed to produce its effect; and prayer not answered is said to return "into the bosom." The sense, therefore, is that, in the case stated, the peace prayed for would not be imparted, the blessing offered would not be given.

Verse 14. *Shake off the dust of your feet.*—The Jews thought the dust of heathen lands polluted, and were careful to free themselves from it. Of this, Wetstein has given many examples from their writers, as, "The dust of Syria defiles, like the dust of other heathen countries." By this significant act, therefore, not performed in passion and resentment, but solemnly, as commanded by Christ, the apostles were to declare that house or city which rejected them, as worthy only to be ranked with the polluted cities of the heathen, even with *Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Verse 15. *In the day of judgment, than for that city.*—That is, than for the *inhabitants* of that city. Collective bodies of men composing cities and nations have their punishment in this life; but in the final judgment they will be dealt with as individuals: "EVERY ONE shall give account of himself to God." Some modern critics, relying on that frail ground, the absence of the article before ημερα, render it "A *day of judgment*;" forgetting that, in the very same day here mentioned, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are also to be judged. The day mentioned can therefore be no other than THE day of final judgment. Let two things here be strongly marked: 1. That the severest TEMPORAL judgments upon sinful men, do not satisfy the claims of the offended justice of a holy God. The wretched inhabitants of the

16 ¶ [i] Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and *harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;
18 And ye shall be brought before

[i] Luke x, 3.

* Or, *simple.*

cities of the plain are still reserved to public trial and future vengeance. 2. That terrible as their case will be, it shall be more tolerable, more *supportable*, than that of those who reject the Gospel of Christ, an act which involves a contempt of the highest manifestation of the Divine mercy.

Verse 16. *Wise as serpents.*—Not wise or skilful to inflict injury, which indeed serpents are, by hiding themselves, and striking their victim unawares. This interpretation is excluded by the next simile, *harmless as doves;* but, as the instinct of the serpent leads him also adroitly to shun danger by quickly retiring into his hiding place, so our Lord enjoins upon his disciples a prudent foresight of impending evils, and a timely escape from them; in opposition to that fanatical courting and braving of persecution, in which some ardent minds might be apt to indulge. This precept, however, shows that Holy Scripture is to be interpreted by a collation of its parts, or we might fall into the greatest errors. In other passages our Lord enjoins the exposing ourselves to all risks and sufferings for the sake of the truth; and even to rejoice in persecutions for his name's sake. Between these there is no contradiction, but the finest moral harmony. Whenever duty, honestly interpreted, without the bias of self-love, allows us to escape danger by the exercise of prudence, not only respect to ourselves, but also that we may prevent others from grievously sinning, by indulging their malignity against Christ, requires that we ought to embrace the opportunity of doing so.—When, however, safety cannot be secured without injury to our Master's truth and cause, no consideration will induce the faithful disciple to desert his post, or to shrink from death itself. PASSION is excluded from our religion, that calm PRINCIPLE may exhibit its more noble triumphs.

Harmless as doves.—This admits of no limitation; but is to be the character of disciples at all times and under all circumstances, whether they fight or fly. *Harmless* ακεραιος, which some derive from α, privative, and κεραω, or κεραννυμι, to mingle and hence render it *pure, without malice:* so Hesychius. But the antithesis appears thus to be lost. As our Lord obviously meant to enjoin prudence, rightly understood, upon his disciples by the proverbial example of the serpent, he must have intended to guard them against that cunning of the serpent which is employed to injure and destroy; the opposite to which is not so properly freedom from malice, which is not an obvious quality of the dove, as *harmlessness*, which has rendered the dove everywhere the emblem of peace. The derivation may therefore be better drawn from α, privative, and κεραιζω, to hurt, and is therefore accurately expressed in our translation. The expression was probably proverbial.

Verse 17. *But beware of men, &c.*—Whether the article before *ανθρωπων* has the emphasis assigned to it by Middleton and others who regard it either as making a renewed mention of the class of men previously designated as "wolves," or as signifying Jews in opposition to heathens, a still less probable supposition, is quite conjectural; and, indeed, either view only serves to divert the reader from what appears to be the true antithesis, which lies not between one class of men and another, but is an implied one between MEN and SERPENTS. The last idea in our Lord's mind was the mischievous nature of the serpent tribe, all imitation of which he forbids to his disciples; and this naturally leads him to caution them against MEN, as more venomous, cunning, and deadly than serpents themselves: *but beware of men.*

Councils, synagogues.—The *councils* here mentioned are the courts attached to each synagogue, which had the power of scourging. The disciples are forewarned that they would be delivered up to *councils* to be proceeded against as delinquents, and the result would be the infliction of "forty stripes, save one," as many of the disciples afterward experienced; for our Lord must be understood, not as speaking of what should happen to the twelve apostles during the temporary mission on which he was now sending them, nor as confining his remarks and exhortations to them alone, but through them to all his persecuted disciples afterward, and to them with respect to their whole ministry to the end of their life. This is clear from the next verse: *And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles;* so that his words manifestly extend to those times also when they should be employed in their mission among the Gentile nations, to whom they were as yet commanded not to go. This consideration is necessary for the right understanding of several parts of this discourse; for if it be restrained only to the first limited mission of the apostles, it becomes in many parts obscure. The scourg-

governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 [k] But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 [l] And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up

[k] Mark xiii, 11; Luke xii, 11.

[l] Luke xxi, 16.

ing of delinquents was performed by the chuzan, or servant of the synagogue. The practice was for the superior judge to read passages out of the law during the infliction of the punishment; the second judge numbered the stripes; and the third gave the order to strike before each blow. St. Paul was thus scourged in the synagogue five times. The instrument of scourging was a leathern thong, doubled and twisted.

Verse 18. *A testimony against them.*—The first preachers of the Gospel gave a strong testimony to the truth of their religion by the readiness which they showed to suffer in attestation of the facts on which it was built, and the truth of which they had the means of knowing with certainty; while the Divine origin of its *doctrines* derived a powerful evidence from the calm heroism, the meek and forgiving spirit, with which they inspired the sufferers. This was also a *testimony* AGAINST their persecutors, because it rendered the cruelties they exercised upon holy, benevolent, and peaceful men inexcusable, and a crime against God, though done often under the sanction of public laws.

Verse 19. *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*—As they would often be questioned, not only as to matters of fact touching their conduct, but as to their motives, designs, and opinions, their appearance before magistrates would necessarily often demand both the statement and defence of the truths of Christianity, and, before Jewish rulers, appeals also to the prophecies of the Old Testament, in which they would have to encounter, not only violent prejudices, but subtle objections. They might naturally therefore be anxious, lest, in such circumstances, through fear, they might lose their self-possession, and through hurry of spirit injure both the truth and themselves. The promise of our Lord was therefore designed to remove all anxiety in this respect. It assured them of special assistance, both as to WHAT *and* HOW *they should speak*, which two particulars comprehend every thing in a suitable and truly eloquent discourse. The matter and the manner both were to be under Divine suggestion; but the latter is not to be understood of the graces of delivery, but of "the spirit and power" of their addresses.—Such is the import of the promise made to the apostles; but it contains no more than all true Christians in all ages may expect, when called upon in any way to bear their testimony to the truth; for new revelations are not at all intended in the text, and in fact do not appear to have been ever made to the first preachers in such circumstances. What is promised is the power to give a clear, convincing, energetic statement of what had been already revealed; an assistance which was to suggest the fittest topics, and the most appropriate manner of stating them.—Why, then, should we be told that other Christians have no authority to look up to Christ their Master with the same confidence? Those who have descanted on the fanaticism of looking for new revelations on the authority of this text, do not themselves understand its meaning, which implies, not the revelation of new truth, but the power of stating effectually that which had been communicated. Let the private Christian, then, when placed in difficult circumstances, and yet is called upon to speak concerning his religion, rely upon the promise of his Master, both to aid his THOUGHTS, and influence his SPIRIT and manner; and let ministers also have the same holy confidence in Divine help in their great though regular employment of PREACHING the Gospel. Nor did it follow from this promise, that the apostles were not previously to study their religion, or to revolve in their minds the points on which they might be interrogated: they were not to be careless as to the matter, but simply not *anxious* and *distracted;* for that is the import of *μη μεριμνησητε*, the words used. This also is applicable to the ordinary exercise of the ministry. After all the previous thought which may have been employed, the dependence, as to the statement of truth in a proper and influential manner, is to be placed upon Christ; and if prayer for Divine aid means any thing, that aid must be similar to the assistance here promised to the apostles when they had to "give a reason of the hope within them" before governors and kings. Like them, too, all true ministers of Christ are authorized to dismiss distracting anxiety, as to what or how they shall speak, and to make their preaching "a work of faith," as well as "a labour of love." Those who choose to write their sermons at full length, and read or repeat them from memory, of course, give up all claim in this promise.

Verse 20. *For it is not you that speak,*

against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: [m] but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not * have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

[m] Mark xiii, 13.

* Or, *end*, or, *finish*.

&c.—You alone do not speak; or, you speak not without special and direct assistance; *but the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you*, by ordering your thoughts, and giving you "utterance." And He who "made man's mouth" to be his instrument, is still "with the mouth" of his faithful servants to this day.

Verse 21. *Children shall rise up.*—That is, if the term be taken forensically, as witnesses in the courts in which their believing parents shall be prosecuted; but it need not be so restricted. The words intimate that religious hatred should sever the tenderest bonds of natural affection, and overcome and pervert the strongest instincts of human nature. This declaration is to be regarded in the light of a prediction, which, in many subsequent ages, has been most fully accomplished; and who but He that "knew what was in man," and whose omniscient eye could search the depths of the future, could have so accurately traced this repulsive feature in the dark history of religious persecutions? The experience of past ages afforded little aid to conjecture here. That persecution "for righteousness' sake," in which the highest degree of truth and holiness uniformly provoked the most diabolical enmity, arising from an unmixed hatred of truth and holiness themselves, which, since Christianity was first introduced into our world, has been practised in almost every age and place, both by Jews, pagans, and hypocritical Christians, had no parallel in the ancient world. To foresee this extraordinary moral phenomenon, and to foretell it, was, in the proper sense, to utter a prophecy, every part of which has been exactly and a thousand times exemplified.

Verse 22. *Endureth to the end, &c.*—Some have explained *the end* to mean the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the *salvation* here promised to the enduring, to be deliverance from the calamities which should befall the Jews; but this is too limited and secular an interpretation. *The end* is the termination of the sufferings and trials of each individual, which would not, however, in all its forms cease but with the life of the faithful disciple; and the *salvation* is deliverance from eternal wrath, to which every one who should be ashamed of confessing Christ would be inevitably doomed. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," may be taken as our Lord's own comment upon these words, in his message to one of the persecuted Churches of Asia Minor. The practice of many commentators to refer so many of the allusions in the discourses of John the Baptist, and those of our Lord, to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the deliverance of the Christians, has destroyed the force of many of the most impressive passages in both. This misapplication, in many instances, is absurd; in others it corrupts the sense of Scripture, and destroys its spirituality. In the present instance, the promise, that *he that endureth to the end shall be saved*, can have no important meaning when considered as a part of a discourse which contains solemn directions to the apostles, as to the exercise of their ministry to the end of their life, and through them to all ministers. What appositeness to this great design would there have been in saying, "He that continues a Christian until Jerusalem is besieged by the Romans, shall escape being shut within its walls?" a danger to which not more than one or two, if any, of the apostles were exposed, they being for the most part absent from Judea; but, if otherwise, it has no correspondence with the labours, sufferings, and rewards of the faithful, enduring minister of Christ, as set forth in other passages, which connect them all with the interests of the soul, and the solemnities and glories of eternity. These remarks are made to guard the reader against those false and generally debasing interpretations of Scripture which often occur even among *learned* commentators, both domestic and foreign, who, not being spiritual men themselves, or prone largely to sacrifice the sense of particular passages to some favourite theory or principle of interpretation, greatly mislead the inattentive and incautious.

Verse 23. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities, &c.*—*Ου μη τελεσητε τας πολεις, ye shall not end or finish the cities*, says the margin, that is, by visiting them. The meaning is, "Ye shall not have accomplished your mission to the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come;" or, "Ye shall scarcely have conveyed to all those cities the tidings of salvation before the Son of man come." The coming of the Son of man signifies his awful manifestation as the Judge of the Jewish nation, by the ever memorable and fatal invasion of the Romans, and the entire consequent subversion of their polity; which invisible coming of his he several times refers to in his prophecies, as the type of his final

24 [n] The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.
25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?
26 Fear them not therefore: [o] for there

[n] Luke vi, 40; John xiii, 16.

[o] Mark iv, 22; Luke viii,

advent as the Judge of the world. This is another proof that the address here made to the apostles referred also to their future ministry after his resurrection, and that of his other commissioned servants; and the object of it was to quicken them to a zealous itinerancy through all the cities of Israel, by intimating that the judgment of that wretched people could not long be delayed. They had a great work to do, and but little space to do it in. Judgment was at the door in its most awful forms, and the ministers of salvation were therefore to employ every effort in plucking as many out of the fire as possible. There was no time to be lost in disputing with the incorrigibly obstinate; "when, therefore, they persecute you in one city, flee to another," and compass the length and breadth of a devoted land in order to save some. To refer this coming of the Son of man to his resurrection or ascension, has no warrant from any similar use of the phrase, and, in fact, wholly obscures the passage; for the apostles were not employed in this work until the resurrection of Christ, except only for a very short time, after which they returned and remained with Christ. If, therefore, the work assigned them, of visiting all the cities of Israel, was subsequent to the resurrection and ascension, then the coming of "the Son of man" must be subsequent to that event also, and can only be referred to his coming to judge and destroy the nation. Some render τελειν, *to instruct*; but this is far-fetched; and there is no necessity for departing from the common rendering: for the objection, that, as many years elapsed before the destruction of Jerusalem, there could be no such scarcity of time to go over the cities of Israel as seems to be intimated; that would be true, if nothing more had been meant than paying a hasty visit to each; but our Lord refers to the serious and laborious efforts of his apostles and other disciples to bring the Jews to embrace the Gospel, in order that they might escape the threatened judgments of God; and forty years was but a short time for them to pursue such labours amid prejudice, calumny, and persecution, so as to discharge their consciences as to every city, and town, and village of Judea, to render all inexcusable, and to train up, out of so corrupt a mass, those numerous, though small Hebrew Churches, which by their instrumentality were in fact raised up.

Verse 24. *The disciple is not above his master, &c.*—The consideration of the humiliations, persecutions, and reproaches of our blessed Lord, will always greatly tend to sustain the patience of the suffering disciples. We can only successfully run the race of difficulty, as the race of duty, by "looking unto Jesus."

Verse 25. *Beelzebub.*—Our translators have followed the Vulgate in writing this name Beelzebub, instead of Beelzebul, which is undoubtedly the true reading. Baalzebub was an Ekronite or Philistine idol, בעל זבוב, mentioned 2 Kings i, 2, and this in Greek is written βεελζεβουλ, Beelzebul, the β being changed into λ, because no word in Greek is found to end in β. The same idol is meant by each appellation; and as this was a chief deity among the pagan nations which surrounded the Jews, and as the latter believed all the false deities of the heathens to be evil spirits, the name was transferred to Satan, and commonly used as a name for "the prince of devils." Baalzebub signifies *the lord of flies*, this deity being probably the object of special trust for deliverance from hornets, locusts, and other winged insects, the scourge of those countries; but with the Jews of our Lord's time it was merely employed as one of the names of Satan. The notion of Lightfoot that Baalzebub was altered by the Jews into Beelzebul, from זבול *Zebul*, DUNG, in order to express their contempt of this and other idols invented by them, and that it was in this contemptuous sense that it was applied to our Lord by the Pharisees, appears to be no better than an ingenious conjecture; for the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions agree with the Vulgate, which indicates that the oriental name was Beelzebub. If Beelzebul be the same as Beelzebub, the change in the final letter when expressed in Greek is sufficiently accounted for above; and if Beelzebul were a different deity from Beelzebub, the word may mean the *Lord of heaven*, or the celestial habitation, זבול, Zebul having that signification: and this was probably the same deity whom the Phenicians, neighbours of the Ekronites, worshipped under the name of בעל שמין, Baal Shemin *Lord of the heavens*. Beside this, the name of Beelzebub or Beelzebul was not given to our Lord with reference to these idols at all, but to Satan himself. It was not, therefore, so much a name of jeering contempt as of deep malignant blasphemy. They called him, in fact, a devil, a chief devil, or, as when speaking out fully on another occasion, "Thou hast A DEVIL, and art mad."

Verse 26. *There is nothing covered, &c.*—As our Lord had been just referring to the

is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

28 [p] And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:

[p] St. Luke, chap. xii, 4.

gross and malicious slanders with which his disciples should be assailed, and as he here fortifies their minds against the fear of calumniators, it is most natural to refer these words to that ultimate justification of their characters and motives which Divine Providence would bring about; so that these words also have a prophetic character. For a time obloquy "covered" and "hid" the faith, the charity, and the purity of the first preachers of the Gospel; and in place of these virtues the worst motives were attributed to them. They were regarded "as the filth and offscouring of all things, and not fit to live," "men that turned the world upside down," "pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition;" but what was thus *covered* and *hid* has been *revealed*. How truly has "the righteousness" of these men, who laid character as well as life upon the altar of sacrifice, "been brought forth as brightness, and their judgment as the noonday!" What honours, true and grateful honours, have been for ages rendered to the apostles, evangelists, and prophets of primitive Christianity, while the names of their revilers have perished in the dust, or been preserved only on the records of infamy! And the hallowed fame of these heroic men still extends; new nations every year learn their history, read their writings, derive life and salvation from the truth for which they suffered and died; and pronounce, and to the end of time shall pronounce, with admiration, affection, and the joyful hope of seeing them in person, these names once cast out as evil, and which were joyfully surrendered to be a "proverb and a byword" for the sake of Christ, and for the salvation of the world. Thus also has constancy in suffering in a righteous cause been often since their day rewarded; and those great imitators of apostolic zeal and patience, by whose efforts fallen truth has so often been raised up in the Church, and the kingdom of darkness successfully assailed, and who long were objects of popular abuse, or the hatred of proud persecutors, have either outlived every calumny, or left a name, the reputation of which God himself has so cared for as to cause it to be embalmed in the grateful homage of succeeding generations.

Verse 27. *What I tell you in darkness.*—This duty is urged by the preceding consideration: if God will take care of the interest and reputation of those who suffer reproach for the sake of Christ, let this animate you to the great duty of openly and fearlessly proclaiming the Gospel. *Darkness* here means *privacy;* for to his disciples alone, partially before, and especially after his resurrection, our Lord opened the full and perfect system of his religion; but not for themselves only, for they were thus made "stewards," dispensers, "of the mysteries of God."

What ye hear in the ear, &c.—This allusion is to a practice in the Jewish synagogues. After the return from the captivity the pure Hebrew was no longer the vernacular tongue of the Jews, yet the law continued to be read in that language; but that its sense might be conveyed to the people, an interpreter, called Targumista, was attached to every synagogue, into whose ear the doctor in a soft voice read the Hebrew text, and the interpreter pronounced it aloud in the common dialect. The Jewish doctors too employed interpreters, from notions of dignity, into whose ear they whispered their instructions in the Hebrew tongue; and they declared them to the multitude in their own dialect. But our Lord gives stronger emphasis to the open and earnest publication of the truths he should privately teach his disciples, by enjoining that they should preach them *upon the house-tops*. The Jewish houses had flat roofs, and so also had their public buildings, from which proclamations were made to the people. The publication of the Gospel is therefore to be a PUBLIC OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION to all ranks of people. This custom appears to explain the words of Christ better than that of sounding a trumpet from the roof by the minister of the synagogue to announce the approach of the Sabbath.

Verse 28. *Are not able to kill the soul.*—Thus our Lord at once declares the soul's immortality, and shows how limited is the power of tyrannous persecutors; their malignant arm reaches not the soul; it can neither destroy its peace here, nor its happy existence hereafter. This text also furnishes a decisive argument in favour of the conscious existence of the soul in a separate state. For, not to urge that we cannot conceive of the existence of the soul at all without consciousness; yet, if by the death of the body it were deprived of perception and thought, of activity and enjoyment, though all these should be restored at the last day, it would be as truly *killed* as the body, which also at the resurrection shall have its life, sensation, and activity more perfectly restored. It is only upon the basis of the soul's immortality, that a true courage in the way of duty can be built: well might

but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a * farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 ¶ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

* It is in value half-penny farthing, in the original, as being the tenth part of the Roman penny.

¶ 2 Sam. xiv, 11; Acts xxvii, 34.

he be excused from suffering for any truth, who has no hope beyond the present life. "That man," says Epictetus, "deserves to be terrified, *αξιος εστι φοβεισθαι*, who has not learned that he himself is not flesh and bones, but that his proper self is that which uses these, and suitably employs them."

Destroy both soul and body in hell.—The meaning is not that the punishment of bad men in a future life is annihilation; for the word is often used to express continuance in a state of wretchedness, as Matt. xv, 24; and, whatever more modern rabbins may have thought, the utter destruction of the souls of the wicked in a future state was not the opinion of the Jews of our Lord's age, except of the Sadducees, who, being materialists, made no distinction between the soul and the body. We have, on this point, the sentiment of Philo: "Men think that death is the end of their troubles, whereas it is only the beginning of them. It is the lot of the wicked that they live in death, and suffer as it were continual death."

Verses 29–31. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? &c.*—This passage forcibly and affectingly declares the providence of God as the foundation of an assured trust on the part of the disciples, even in the most perplexed and dangerous circumstances.—The connection of the argument with what precedes is, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;" so limited is their power, so short the arm of your most potent adversary: but this is not the only reason why you ought not to fear these wrathful and tyrannous men; even the limited power they have they cannot exert independently of the Divine permission.—Their hearts and hands are grasped by an invisible but superior control; and neither in their own time, nor in their own manner, can they injure or destroy you. Either they shall be entirely restrained from injuring you at all, or, when left to follow the impulses of their own bad passions, all results are still under the control of God. Till your work is done, or till your sufferings shall be for his glory and your own advantage, they rage only in a chain which they cannot break.—This is supported by a general illustration applicable to the trust and comfort of Christ's true disciples, beyond the immediate occasion which called it forth. Sparrows are mentioned as representing the smallest and most insignificant class of birds, of so little value that two were sold for a farthing, an *assarium*, about three of our farthings; yet so minute and universal is the providence of God, that nothing to which he has given life dies but by his permission. As in the sermon on the mount God is represented as caring to provide the fowls of heaven with food, so here he is introduced as regulating the production and the extinction of the life of every individual, however small and contemptible. The argument then arises from the less to the greater; *ye are of more value than many sparrows;* and if the life of an individual bird cannot perish *without your Father*, how much less the life of a human being, the life of a ransomed child of God, the life of a man sent forth on the greatest work upon earth, to proclaim salvation, and that under God's special commission, as his own ambassador! Nor is the notice and care of God directed to individual persons only, but to whatever concerns that individual, however minute: *the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* This mode of expression appears to be taken from 1 Sam. xiv, 45; "And the people said, Shall Jonathan die? —God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground;" that is, he shall not sustain the least conceivable injury. The very brightness of this revelation of the doctrine of a particular providence has dazzled the eye of mere human philosophy. A general providence it may often admit; but not this condescension of the Divine Being to particulars. The true reason, however, is, that, with all its pretence to high and noble views of God, it, in fact, grovels in low and unworthy conceptions of his wisdom and power; and it knows nothing of his LOVE, his peculiar love to those who trust in him. But, even in right reason, the care of the whole necessarily implies the care of all the parts, however minute; and if it was not beneath God to create the smallest objects, it can never be thought below him to preserve and order them. Nor ought the allegation, that God has established general laws, to be suffered to obscure in our minds the great truth which these words of Christ contain. These general laws depend for their efficiency upon his continued agency; for natural things have no powers which they derive not from him; and these they cannot exercise independently of him; or even that general government of the world which is conceded would be put out of his hand. Ordinarily, there is in God what has been called an ACQUIESCENCE in a

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 [r] Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 [s] But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 [t] Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance [u] against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 [v] He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 [w] And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

[r] Luke xii, 8.—[s] Mark viii, 38; Luke ix, 26; 2 Tim. ii. 12.—[t] Luke xii, 51.

[u] Micah vii, 6.—[v] Luke xiv, 26.—[w] Matt. xvi, 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix, 23.

common course of events, or rather his power ordinarily works in an observable, regular manner; but there is also INTERPOSITION as well as acquiescence, or prayer and individual trust must be expunged from religion, and with them religion itself must lose the great foundations upon which it rests.—These then are the noble views which are opened to us by the Divine Teacher. God regulates every thing, however minute, without degradation to his glorious majesty, and without embarrassment to his infinite intelligence. He governs absolutely without violence to the moral freedom of accountable beings, and their contending volitions wonderfully but certainly work out his purposes; but no general arrangement can render his special interposition impracticable, since all is foreseen and all provided for. The true disciple may therefore fully "trust in his mercy:" God himself takes his cause into his hand, orders his steps, weighs out his blessings and his afflictions, wards off his dangers, controls his enemies, disposes all the events of life into a course of hallowing discipline, and never permits him to fall into the hands of an enemy except when by that means some good to the Church, and some benefit to the suffering disciple himself, are to be accomplished by it; so that, even then, "he maketh the wrath of man to praise him." This may often take place by an inscrutable process; but the result is certain.

Verse 32. *Confess me, &c.*—To confess Christ is openly to acknowledge our faith in him, and publicly to observe the rules and ordinances of his religion. Ομολογεω properly signifies to use the same language or words as another; and hence, says Wahl, in the New Testament, by implication, "to profess the same things as another, to admit what another professes." Him, therefore, who publicly and courageously confesses Jesus to be what he professed to be, that is, the Christ, and acts suitably to that belief, him will Christ publicly confess to be what he himself professes to be: that is, a true disciple of Christ. See the note on Luke xii, 8.

Verse 34. *To send peace, but a sword.*—Those who refer this to the Roman sword, which, about forty years after Christ's ascension, desolated Judea, forcibly break off the words from their connection. From the persecutions which our Lord predicted should be excited against his religion, he proceeds to declare the dissensions of which, through the guilty passions of men, it should be the innocent occasion; a prophetic declaration equally remarkable as the former, and an effect which had no exact parallel in the previous history of man; so that to foretell this, as the consequence of the introduction of a religion of pure benevolence and charity, could only result from a certain prescience of the future. As to the mode of expression used, it is to be observed, that in the Hebrew idiom one is said to do that which he is the occasion of being done, however undesigned by him, nay, though directly contrary to his intentions. Thus Isaiah is commanded to "make the heart of the people fat, and their ear heavy," because the mission on which he was sent would have that effect, through the criminal obstinacy of his hearers; and Jeremiah calls himself "a man of strife and contention to the whole land," because the delivery of his exhortations and reproofs had occasioned great strife against himself among the exasperated rulers. Attention to these peculiarities in the style of speaking which obtained among the Hebrews, is absolutely necessary to a right interpretation of many passages; and, for want of it, some very false conclusions have been drawn from the texts in which they occur. To apply this to our Lords words: the end of Christ's coming was unquestionably to establish peace on earth; but because sharp dissensions, and the alienation of friends and families, have often been the result, through the violent enmity of the carnal mind to truth and holiness, he represents himself, according to the oriental mode of speaking, as having sent, not PEACE, but a SWORD, and as *setting a man at variance with his father, &c.*

Verse 38. *That taketh not his cross and*

39 [x] He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 ¶ [y] He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 [z] And whosoever shall give to drink

[x] John xii, 25.—[y] Luke x, 16; John xiii, 20.

[z] Mark ix, 41.

followeth, &c.—There is an allusion here to the custom of the Romans, who compelled those who were to be crucified to bear the cross on which they were to suffer to the place of execution; but, as crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, and even if the power of life and death had now been taken away from the Jews by the Romans, this was but a recent event, it can scarcely be thought that they had become so familiar with it as that "*to take the cross*" should have already become proverbial for the endurance of sufferings. The notion of Grotius, that the Jews had the phrase from the Persians, who used that punishment, can scarcely be admitted, because it was long since the Persians had had any power in Judea, and even then the Jews were permitted to use their own laws and customs. The words of our Lord had probably a prophetic reference to the manner of his own death, and had a meaning therefore which was to be hereafter more fully explained. He was to *take his cross*, and endure this barbarous Roman punishment; and he here declares, that every one who is not willing to *follow* him in this respect, that is, to die for the truth, is not worthy of him, that is, not *worthy* of him as his Lord and Master, or to be called his disciple. The cross stands for DEATH, in its most frightful and ignominious forms, but includes all other minor sufferings to be endured for the truth; but it is ridiculous to apply this phrase of taking up the cross, as is often done, to express submission to some little mortification of our will, or to some duty not quite agreeable to our views and feelings. By a careless habit of using the language of Scripture, the force of many important passages of Scripture is silently undermined.

Verse 39. *He that findeth his life, &c.*—To find and to lose here signifies the same as to save and to lose. Hence in Prov. xxix, 10, we read, "the just shall SEEK his soul;" shall seek it successfully; that is, shall *find* it: in other words, shall *save* or preserve it. We have here another instance of that enigmatical manner of speaking often adopted by our Lord, especially when he uses strong antitheses; and which gives them so great a force. The term LIFE is manifestly used in two senses, both for the animal life, and the immortal soul: "*he* that *findeth* or saveth his bodily *life* by cowardly desertion of my cause, shall *lose his life*," or soul, that is, the felicity of the immortal principle in man; and *he that loseth his* bodily *life* for my sake, *shall find*, or save *his life*, that is, his soul, which shall be raised to the blessedness of a higher and future life. The paranomasia in this instance was favoured by the original word ψυχη, which signifies both *life* and *soul*, as also does the Syriac word. It is a somewhat striking remark of Tertullian, with reference to our Lord's phrases, to save life, and to lose it for his sake, that the heathen judges, when they would persuade a Christian to renounce his faith, made use of these terms, *Serva animam tuam*, "Save your life;" and, *Noli animam tuam perdere*, "Do not throw your life away."

Verse 41. *A prophet in the name of a prophet.*—That is, to receive a Christian teacher *in the name of*, or in consideration of his being a Christian teacher, a servant of Christ, and a publisher of his messages, and not merely from common hospitality, or personal friendship, or for his parts and eloquence; but, as it is expressed in the preceding verse, receiving Christ himself in and by him who represents Christ as his ambassador. He shall receive a *prophet's reward*; a reward proportioned to the office which is held by him who is received, and which he that receives honours. There is here, no doubt, an allusion to the special benefits conferred upon several persons mentioned in the Old Testament, who received the prophets in ancient times; as the hostess of Elijah, whose barrel of meal did not waste, and whose cruise of oil did not fail, until the famine of the land ceased; and the two instances in which the deceased children of those who entertained prophets were restored to life, one by Elijah, the other by Elisha. Similar rewards are not intended; but still great rewards either in time or eternity, and sometimes in both.

A righteous man.—That is, a private Christian who bears not the office of a minister of Christ. In the early times especially, it was necessary for Christians to practise a liberal hospitality toward each other, by opening their houses to believing travellers, lest they should be exposed to mix with idolaters. To such acts Christ promises a blessing, provided every such righteous man be received as a righteous man; that is, in respect of his faith in Christ, and his relation-

unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.

ship to him as one of his disciples. Even should he prove a hypocrite, yet being received as a sincere disciple of Christ, the host shall not lose his reward.

Verse 42. *A cup of cold water.*—An acceptable gift to the thirsty traveller in those countries, and often not easily to be procured but by the benevolence of hospitable persons. Yet where water was abundant, as in cities, it was a present of small value. Some poor persons indeed might have no more to give; yet, being offered *in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, it shall in no wise lose its reward.* In the Talmud it is said, that whoever entertains a man well instructed in the law, and causes him to eat and drink, shall be more blessed than the house of Obed Edom was for the ark's sake; for the ark neither ate nor drank with him. This as well as many other sayings, similar to those of our Lord, we may again remark, were in all probability borrowed from the New Testament, with which the wise men among the Jews in former times were very conversant. Thus they have imitated the words of Christ in verse 29 of this chapter, saying, "A bird without God does not perish; much less, a man: a bird without God does not fly away; much less, the soul of a man;" with many other instances. Our Lord here calls his disciples his *little ones*, οι μικροι, referring either to the humble condition of the disciples, as Beza thinks; or, probably, as Kuinoel thinks, the word is used like the Hebrew קָטָן, which signifies both a little one and a disciple.

CHAPTER XI.

2 John sendeth his disciples to Christ. 7 Christ's testimony concerning John. 8 The opinion of the people, both concerning John and Christ. 20 Christ upbraideth the unthankfulness and unrepentance of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum: 25 and praising his Father's wisdom in revealing the Gospel to the simple, 28 he calleth to him all such as feel the burden of their sins.

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

CHAPTER XI. Verse 3. *Art thou he that should come? &c.*—That John sent these disciples to obtain such information from Christ as might remove doubts which he himself through infirmity had begun to entertain, as to the character of our Lord, is the view of many expositors. And they have devised and indulged conjectures to account for this failure in the strength of John's previous faith; all of which, like the assumption that the prophet fell into any doubt on the subject, are perfectly gratuitous. The evidences which John had received as to Jesus being the Christ, were too strong to be easily shaken, and he had views too spiritual as to his kingdom to be "offended" at his lowly course of life. The expression of St. Matthew, "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ," also intimates this; for Christ is not here used as a proper name, but with the article, and would more properly have been rendered, *the works of the* Christ, or the Messiah. He knew that these were the works by which *the* Christ was to demonstrate himself; and he sends his disciples to hear, or to be witnesses of them, in order to their believing in him. This question is fully set at rest by the remark of our Lord respecting John in a subsequent verse, where he declares that "he was not a reed shaken with the wind," and, therefore, a firm and immovable character; a eulogy which he would scarcely have merited had he, after such testimonies from heaven, doubted of the Messiahship of him whom he had baptized in Jordan, and on whom he had seen the Holy Spirit visibly descend. The disciples sent by him, therefore, were obviously sent to converse with our Lord for their own conviction. Some of John's followers had already joined Christ; and their number had been greatly on the decline before he was cast into prison. This he knew was according to the Divine order; for his own words were, "I must decrease, but he must increase." He had now probably very few disciples remaining; but as he would still continue his work of calling men to repentance as Christ's forerunner, even in the prison, to which it does not appear that any were denied access to him, the men now sent were probably among his most recent converts. His office was to lead his disciples to believe in Jesus as the Christ, whose way he was to "prepare;" but he too would have to combat with their prejudices. They might, in several cases, be willing to admit John's claim to be a prophet; but

2 [a] Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 [b] The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and [c] the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

[a] Luke vii, 18.—[b] Isaiah xxxv, 5, 6.

[c] Isaiah lxi, 1.

would stumble at his doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah whose approaching manifestation he was commissioned to announce, because of his not assuming the external splendour they expected. In such cases they would be most effectually put in the way of receiving full conviction by a personal conversation with our Lord. There is also another view. The life of John was precarious, and dependent upon the caprice of Herod, and he would naturally be anxious to provide for the religious welfare of his remaining followers, by attaching them to Christ; and the two here mentioned were probably sent with the question proposed, that they might report the answer of our Lord to the rest, an answer to which John knew well how to give weight. It is clear from the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we," must we, "look for another?" and from one part of our Lord's reply, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me," that a difficulty existed in their minds whether Jesus was the Messiah for whom John had taught them to "look," arising out of circumstances as to which they were in danger of "being offended;" and this can only be resolved into the lowly condition of our Lord, and his keeping himself chiefly in the remote province of Galilee. They came, therefore, sent by John, and to him they were to report the answer, not for the resolution of any doubt of his, but that he might communicate it to his disciples, as an answer to their difficulties from Jesus himself.

Verse 5. *The blind receive their sight, &c.*—These were the proofs on which our Saviour rested his claim to be the Messiah for the conviction of John's disciples; but why did he refer to such works when the disciples of John could scarcely have been ignorant of his miracles, the "fame" of which, it is so often said, spread throughout "all that region?" The reason was, that the message being sent to John their master, manifestly as the proper person to point out its force to his disciples, he could not but perceive that the cogency of Christ's answer lay in the reference which it makes to the fulfilment of two illustrious passages in Isaiah, which speak so clearly of the Messiah, that the Jewish writers themselves have never hesitated in applying them to him. The first is Isaiah xxxv, 5, 6: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." The other passage was indicated by the last clause of the reply, *And the poor have the* GOSPEL *preached to them.* It is Isaiah lxi, 1, &c: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach *good tidings* unto the MEEK; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives," &c. The Messiah of the prophet was to perform miracles of healing; and he was to be a preacher of GOOD TIDINGS, of the Gospel, to poor, humble, afflicted persons, the captives of sin and misery; and this, as though our Lord had said, is the work in which I am engaged. He even adds to the miracles mentioned by Isaiah as to be performed by Messiah, *and the dead are raised;* the force of which would be felt, if the sentiment of the modern rabbins was then held, that "in the land where the dead should arise, the kingdom of the Messiah should commence." That the Jews expected the Messiah to perform great miracles, is clear from John vii, 31: "When the Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"

Verse 6. *Offended in me.*—Σκανδαλιζω is from σκανδαλον, which in Scripture signifies a trap, or snare, a sharp stake driven into the ground to impede the march of an enemy by wounding the feet; a stone or block laid in a path to cause a person to stumble or fall; and metaphors from each are in the New Testament couched under the common term. Generally it refers either to that which gives occasion to sin and unbelief, or is made so by perversion, or that which acts as an impediment in the Christian cause, by producing discouragement and impatience.

Verse 7. *Concerning John.*—The visit of John's disciples gave our Lord an opportunity to bear a most honourable testimony to his faithful, but now imprisoned, herald and

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is *he* of whom it is written, [d] Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

[d] Malachi, chap. iii, 1.

forerunner, and to declare him to be the Elias of prophecy. *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?*—That is, what kind of man did you find in the wilderness of Jordan, when you went out in multitudes to see and to hear John? Was he *a reed shaken by the wind?* Yielding to every gust like the reeds on the banks of Jordan where he baptized? The question implies a strong negative, which Whitby has well expressed. "You did not go to see a man wavering in his testimony, but firm and constant." *A man clothed in soft raiment?* Dressed in luxurious garb, as they who *are in kings' houses*. Here our Lord refers to his plain fidelity rather than to dress merely, to his truth-speaking and earnest appeals to them, so far removed from the phrase and flattery, and double-tongued hypocrisy, and delicate avoidance of offence, found among courtiers in the palaces of kings, who were distinguished for the softness of their raiment. *A prophet?* He was truly a prophet, as being a commissioned servant of God, favoured with direct revelations, acting under the impulse of inspiration; and appointed, like the ancient prophets, both to warn a guilty people, and to describe the character and glories of Messiah. In all these respects John was truly *a prophet;* but our Lord adds with emphasis, *yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet*, more than the greatest of the ancient prophets, not one of them being excepted; and he was so in this distinguished particular, that he was the precursor of the Messiah, and not only predicted his future coming, but actually introduced him to the people, and bade a sinful race "behold" not the typical sacrifice for sin, but "THE LAMB OF GOD," the true, the divinely appointed sacrifice and oblation for "the sin of the world."

Verse 10. *For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, &c.*—That John was the person intended by Malachi iii, 1, so that here is no pretence for an accommodated sense, we learn from the passage being here applied by Christ himself to his forerunner, in its direct and primary sense. As is usual with the Jews, a part of this prophecy only is quoted, as introductory to the whole; but from the entire passage we learn that John was God's αγγελος or *messenger;* that his office was to *prepare the way* of Messiah *before his face* immediately, the Master following the servant without any delay; that THE LORD, the Divine Messiah, whom, says the prophet, ye seek, whom all the Jewish people were looking for, should *suddenly come to his temple*, and that he should appear as the *messenger of the covenant*, bringing with him God's covenant of grace and peace with man, to open its great provisions and promises, and to ratify it with his own blood, and then to publish it by his apostles to all nations. Thus emphatically does this illustrious prophecy mark the characters both of John and of our Lord. In both it was illustriously fulfilled; but no other two persons since the date when it was uttered can be adduced to whose characters and actions it in the least degree corresponds. In the prophecy of Malachi above cited, there is a considerable difference between the evangelist and the Hebrew and Septuagint. The words προ προσωπου σου, *before thy face*, are added; and for לפני, *before me*, we have εμπροσθεν σου, *before thee*. The exact agreement of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who all quote the same prophecy, sufficiently shows that their copies of the Hebrew or Septuagint differed in these particulars from the present; but, nevertheless, the sense is scarcely at all affected. The divinity of the Messiah, as JEHOVAH, THE LORD OF THE TEMPLE, as well as *the messenger of the covenant*, are the lofty characters under which it is presented.

Verse 11. *The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater, &c.*—Great is the testimony of Christ to the official character of John, who is also emphatically styled "the prophet of the Highest," Luke i, 76; nevertheless it is added, *the least in the kingdom of heaven*, the least prophet or teacher of the full and perfected dispensation of Christ, instructed in its system of glorious truth, endowed with miraculous powers, which John was not; able to attest the actual death, resurrection, ascension, and glorious instalment of Messiah in his universal kingdom of grace and power, and, whether endowed with miraculous gifts or not, instructed in the method of salvation through faith in him, and commissioned to teach this simple and ever open way to God through him, empowered to offer pardon and remission of sins "in his name," and to unfold all the holy attainments

12 [e] And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven * suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is [f] Elias, which was for to come.

[e] Luke xvi, 16.—* Or, *is gotten by force, and they that thrust men.*—[f] Mal. iv, 5.

made possible to man by the promised influence of the Holy Spirit, *is greater*, greater as it respects his office, than John. These words are also applicable to subsequent Christian teachers, and even to private Christians with respect to their illumination on all the subjects connected with the kingdom of grace.

Verse 12. *Suffereth violence.*—The allusion here is to a siege, and the figure is taken from the rush of a multitude to take a city by assault; in which sense the passage is usually understood. One sense given to the passage is, that the hearers of Christ were taught by it that those only who were prepared to encounter the most violent opposition, and to put forth the strongest efforts to surmount it, could enter the kingdom of heaven; such was the strength of their own prejudices and errors, and such also the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees, and other influential persons among the Jews.—This was indeed a great truth, and it remains applicable to this day, since not only strong exertions must be made against our own interests and sinful passions, but, in many cases, against the example and persecuting hostility of others, if we would enter the kingdom of heaven in truth as well as in profession. But the words seem rather to refer to the eagerness with which the multitude received the testimony both of John and Christ, in spite of the calumnies heaped by their teachers and rulers upon both, and the rage which they often manifested. This sense of the words is greatly confirmed by the parallel place in Luke xvi, 16: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." And it will serve to illustrate the passage, if we recollect that the Jewish teachers, like the Gentile philosophers, confined what they esteemed their superior knowledge to persons of a certain class; and they neglected and even despised the body of the populace. "The people know not the law, and are accursed," was their contemptuous language; and hence they were left "as sheep having no shepherd." John's preaching was popular, as all true preaching must be; it was adapted to instruct and save the mass of society; and the impression of it was so great, that multitudes from every part of Palestine came to his baptism, and gladly heard from him that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Of this popular and condescending character, also, was the preaching of Christ. He held forth the same hope, that the same kingdom was "at hand;" and the multitudes hung upon his lips, and followed him on his journeys. The excitement, indeed, appears to have been as ardent as it was general; and thus did these neglected people "press into the kingdom of God," as far as it was then revealed; and, like a tumultuous rush of soldiers scaling the walls of a city, they appeared determined to seize the glorious and heart-touching truths which had so long been withheld from them. There came, indeed, a time of trial afterward: many of these eager spirits were "offended" in Christ, turned back, and "walked no more with him;" and the subtle activity of the envious and exasperated scribes and Pharisees blasted much of this hopeful show in fields "white unto harvest:" but still great numbers, no doubt, were saved, and the people were prepared for the labourers sent forth among them after the resurrection; for we read in several places of the Acts, that in different parts "multitudes believed." The body of the nation, however, remained impenitent; and Jerusalem especially maintained its ancient character for the obduracy with which its inhabitants rejected the testimony of God; and most of the higher orders everywhere, the persons who formed what was properly THE JEWISH STATE, put away from them the proffered grace, and succeeded at length in inspiring others with the same hatred of Christ and his servants, "until wrath came upon them to the uttermost."

Verse 13. *Prophesied until John.*—The causal particle, γαρ, shows that a reason is here given for the pressing of the people into the kingdom of God, just mentioned.—The word *prophesied*, in order to make this reason apparent, must be taken in its proper sense of *predicted*, otherwise the connection is not discernible. Until John, *the law and the prophets* PREDICTED the kingdom of heaven, the spiritual reign and institutions of Messiah, as being still afar off in the distant future; but John did not so properly PREDICT that kingdom as ANNOUNCE it to be "at hand," as even now introducing, and already incipiently present. This news was eagerly seized by the multitudes whom his preaching had brought to repentance, and they flocked in crowds to Christ its author, from whom they had been taught by John to expect the remission of their sins, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 14. *This is Elias, which was for to*

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

16 ¶ ε But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

ε St. Luke, chap. vii, 31.

come.—Elias is the same as Elijah, under which name the Prophet Malachi, iv, 5, predicted the coming of John the Baptist. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;" that is, before the destruction of the Jewish state by the terrible judgments of God. That Elijah himself was not intended, as some of the Jews dreamed, and indeed still expect, but one called prophetically and figuratively by his name, on account of a similarity of character, we have confirmed to us by the same authority which dictated the original prophecy; for the angel sent from God to announce John's birth, declares, "He shall go before in the spirit and power of Elias," Luke i, 17. Thus the prophecy is also interpreted by our Lord, not of Elijah, but of John. Some of the fathers, and others since, have, however, held that Elijah should really appear before the second advent of Christ; but if in the original prophecy, John the Baptist, not Elijah, was intended, then John the Baptist must come again; but for what end, no one surely can devise, since the least preacher in the kingdom of heaven is "greater" in his office "than he." The notion seems to have arisen from a misapprehension of Malachi's prophecy, which speaks of Elijah coming before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord;" which they erroneously apply to the day of Christ's second coming to judge the world. That, indeed, will be a great and dreadful day of the Lord; but it is not the day meant by the prophet; and, as we have seen, the whole prediction is restricted, by the angel who announced to Zacharias the birth, character, and office of his honoured son, to him alone. The resemblance of John to Elijah the Tishbite was very striking; and one can scarcely think of the inflexible and awakening preacher in the wilderness of Jordan, without being reminded of him who was "exceeding jealous for the Lord of hosts;" while Elijah's boldness before Ahab and Jezebel has a striking parallel in the bold manner in which John reproved the incestuous intercourse of Herod and Herodias.

Verse 15. *He that hath ears to hear, &c.*—This is a solemn form of calling the attention to some point of great consequence, to be considered and well understood. Such was this whole discourse concerning John, and especially the prophecies respecting him which Christ had pointed out, because their accomplishment gave the strongest testimony to the claims of Christ, whose forerunner he was.

Verses 16, 17. *But whereunto shall I liken, &c.*—This was one of the usual forms of introducing a comparison or parable, both of which were favourite modes of speaking among the orientals; and especially, says St. Jerome, were familiar to the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine: *Familiare est Syris, et maxime Palestinis, ad omnem sermonem suum parabolas jungere.* Την γενεαν ταυτην, *this race*, meaning the perverse scribes and Pharisees, and their followers, a *generation* or race descended from others of like spirit, and likely to transmit the same pride, prejudice, and captiousness to those who should succeed them; men who united the malignity of persecutors with the perverse pettishness of children, refusing to be pleased with the sports proposed by their fellows. To such children, therefore, in the *markets*, εν αγοραις, market places, squares, or any open spaces of a city, imitating in their plays the dances at a feast, or the lamentations at funerals, our Lord compares them. The Jews used pipes, *tibiæ*, to lead up the dance on festive occasions; and, as noted above, they employed them also at funerals, to lead the funeral dirge, in which all the mourners joined. *We have piped* in cheerful strains *unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you*, played the sorrowful funeral dirge, *and ye have not lamented*, ye have not joined us in the sad strain, singing and beating your breasts. The meaning is, as appears from the next verse, that neither the affable familiarity with which Christ had mingled in their society, nor the secluded austerity of John, had succeeded to win their attention, or to soften their moroseness.

Verse 18. *For John came neither eating nor drinking, &c.*—That is, he did not live a social life, nor attended any of their domestic feasts; *and they*, the scribes and Pharisees, *say, He hath a devil*, he is possessed by a demon, which drives him into solitude, and overwhelms him with melancholy. *The Son of man came eating and drinking;* he lived with men in cities, and only retired occasionally into the wilderness; when invited, he attended marriages and other feasts, to sanctify the cheerfulness of family meetings, to

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

20 ¶ [h] Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty

[h] St. Luke, chap. x, 13.

engage the attention of the guests to his heavenly doctrine, to overcome their prejudices by his mild condescensions, to make the customs of social life the means of conveying instruction by founding parables upon them, and in these respects, as well as once literally, to turn THE WATER INTO WINE. But for all this he was slandered as *gluttonous and a winebibber, and a friend*, not of the souls, but of the vices, *of publicans and sinners*. With such virulence were both the master and the servant treated! and so easy is it for envy and malice to give an odious colouring to the most wise and holy conduct! The comparison of the stately and affected Pharisees, and Jewish doctors, to peevish, ill tempered children in the market places, was sufficiently humbling to their pride.

Verse 19. *But wisdom is justified of her children.*—The *και* here is properly taken by our translators in the sense of *αλλα, but*; for these words are not, as some understand them, a continuation of the censorious remarks attributed to the Pharisees, which would force a sense upon the verb which it never bears in the New Testament, or in the Septuagint; but they contain the meek but pointed answer which our Lord gives to all the slanders of his enemies. *Wisdom* is personified; and by *the children* of Wisdom he evidently intends John the Baptist and himself; while the term *justified* is to be taken in its usual sense of "acquitted from blame." The sense therefore is, that the heavenly wisdom or doctrine which both John and Christ had been commissioned to teach, so far from having been criminated by their conduct, as though it led on the one hand to a morose contempt of mankind, or on the other to any sanction of their vices, had been illustrated, honoured, and raised above all censure. The spirit and the conduct of each had declared that the doctrine they taught was *the wisdom from above*. This remark of our Lord is, however, a general truth of large application. The true "children of wisdom," in every age, are all those who receive and hold the truth of Christ's doctrine; and they will "justify" it, clear it of all the charges which ignorant and unbelieving men may direct against it, by their prudent and holy life and conversation. By this "the mouth of gainsayers" is most effectually "stopped," and the truth of Christianity most effectually demonstrated before the world. Let the professed "children of wisdom," therefore, always recollect this as a motive to maintain a conduct in all respects consonant with the truth which they have received, that they are charged with the very character and credit of Christianity, and that it depends upon them to extend or to diminish its influence upon all with whom they are surrounded. They are thus to justify it as the wisdom of God before the world.

Verse 21. *Wo unto thee, Chorazin, &c.*—Ουαι is sometimes an interjection of pity and grief, but of malediction also; for it was in this spirit that our Saviour pronounced his woes against these favoured cities, and against Jerusalem itself, but it was pity reluctantly giving place to righteous wrath.—*Chorazin* is placed by Jerome within two miles of Capernaum. Out of Chorazin as well as Bethsaida many disciples had doubtless been raised up; but the body of the people remained impenitent; and their guilt was aggravated by the *mighty works* which Christ had done among them, in attestation of his mission, and in the neighbouring country; for our Lord spent most of his public life on the shores of the sea of Galilee, in Capernaum, and Bethsaida, frequently itinerating through the other cities and towns of the adjoining districts. *Tyre and Sidon*, on the Mediterranean coast of Syria or Palestine, were the most celebrated maritime cities of antiquity, and as remarkable for their power and opulence, as for the greatness of their fall; their pride, luxury, and idolatry having brought upon them those tremendous judgments which left them signal monuments of desolation to future ages. What previous warnings they might have had from God we know not; but certainly they had none enforced by such "mighty works" as our Lord had wrought in the cities of Galilee. The peculiar hardness of the hearts of the inhabitants of the latter was therefore rendered the more conspicuous and inexcusable; and for them a sorer punishment was reserved. As to this life, indeed, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had a similar fate to theirs: they were utterly destroyed by the Romans; and they lie, even to this day, in a state of as utter ruin. Yet a future judgment awaits both the inhabitants of the Syrian and Galilean cities; and in that day *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon*, and Sodom, *than for them*, because their sin will be punished according to its exact desert, as aggravated by the superior

works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 ¶ [i] At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

[i] St. Luke, chap. x, 21.

religious advantages which they enjoyed and slighted.

Repented long ago, παλαι, "in old time," *in sackcloth and ashes*.—To put on a garment of hair cloth, and sprinkle ashes upon the head, was the custom of mourners and deep penitents. They would have repented as the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonas, and with much feebler evidences of his having a Divine commission. Whether this repentance would have been one produced by concern for their spiritual interests, or by terror at approaching temporal judgments, our Lord does not say. That of the Ninevites was obviously the latter; and God had respect to it as an acknowledgment of him, in the same manner as he had respect to the public and deep humiliation of Ahab, which also was excited by a threatened external punishment. Our Lord seems to have intended chiefly to say that, with all their wickedness, those ancient cities were not so obstinately set to resist supernatural evidences of truth as the cities he reproves.—Determined infidelity, the result of false reasoning, and pride, and self-righteousness, was not their sin; and in such cases his preaching to them, enforced by such mighty works, would have produced an impression which it did not upon the inhabitants of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. Still let it be remembered that they had SUFFICIENT warnings, instructions, and mercies to render them *inexcusable*; and they could have no ground to complain of severity, much less of injustice. All have not equal favours, but all are dealt with in perfect equity.

Verse 23. *Capernaum*.—Capernaum, as having been the residence of our Lord, is reproved distinctly; and the impenitence and obduracy of its people are more strongly marked by being contrasted, not with Tyre and Sidon, but with the infamous Sodom;—even Sodom would have repented, and remained to this day, had the mighty works been done in that devoted city as in thee, Capernaum!

Brought down to hell.—The word here used is *αδης*, not *γεεννα*, the place of future punishment, and is to be taken figuratively. *Exalted to heaven*, may express the flourishing condition of the city, or its pride, Isa. xiv, 11; and to be *brought down to hell* means, therefore, its utter destruction; to express which *αδης* is used, a word which generally signifies the invisible world of disembodied spirits, but also answering to the שְׁאוֹל of the Hebrews, which has often the sense of destruction. In the phrase, *exalted to heaven*, some think there might be a figurative reference to the lofty and commanding situation of Capernaum, on one of the hills of that mountainous region. But the exact site of this devoted city does not seem to have been certainly discovered by the most recent travellers, who conjecture only that certain ruins may be the remains of what was once Capernaum, but without any sufficient evidence of the identity. So completely have the words of our Lord been fulfilled as to the temporal punishment of this once favoured place! As the grave covers her inhabitants, so her very ruins are brought down to that region, and lie covered up in silence and darkness as the bodies of her slain. The punishment of the inhabitants, in the future life, is threatened in the next verse: "In the day of judgment it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom," that is, the inhabitants of the land of Sodom, "than for thee." Our Lord also intended to teach the righteous apportionment of punishment to the degree of guilt. By how much more terrible was the destruction of the land of Sodom by a tempest of fire than the destruction of Tyre and Sidon, by so much shall the punishment of the inhabitants of Capernaum at the day of judgment be than that of the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, as more guilty even than they: the penalty, terrible as to all, shall be righteously distributed in its more intense degree. Let all deeply meditate upon these alarming passages who abuse the superior privileges and opportunities of instruction which they enjoy, and be awakened to this conviction, that the greatest guilt of man is to slight and reject the offered salvation of the Gospel.

Verses 25, 26. *At that time Jesus answered*, &c.—To *answer* is not in the gospels always used in the sense of *to reply* to some previous question, opinion, or objection, but often expresses the commencement

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 [k] All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; [l] neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

[k] John iii, 35.

[l] John vi, 46.

of a discourse, or of some new branch of discourse. One reason of this mode of speaking, in some cases, seems to be, that our Lord being surrounded with hearers still hanging on his lips, and anxious to hear his farther observations, they were tacitly regarded under the view of inquirers; and he is said *to answer* when he adapts his discourse to the various doubts, or to the questions which might be rising up, though indistinctly, in their minds. This is a striking character of the perfection of his teaching, that, knowing as he did the very thoughts and secret difficulties and prejudices of his hearers, he could adapt his discourses to them, as though they had been formally propounded as questions.

That thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, &c.—The *things* referred to are "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," in which he was training up his disciples. It has been thought that the *time* when our Lord spoke these words was not that in which he uttered the predictions respecting the cities of Galilee, in the preceding verses, because in St. Luke we find them in connection with the return of the seventy; to which circumstance, it is therefore said, they properly belong: but they were probably spoken on two occasions; on which supposition we may establish the connection thus. The scribes and Pharisees, the professed *wise and prudent*, or learned of the Jewish nation, had been the main cause of fostering the unbelief of the devoted cities our Lord had been just reproving; and with reference to them he utters this solemn thanksgiving to his *Father:* not that he thanks God for their blindness and unbelief; but that, as these mysteries were hidden from them, through their own guilty pride and folly, God had not left himself without instruments to teach them to the world, and those more suitable for the work, as having themselves received the truth in simplicity and humbleness of mind. In other words, the subject of our Lord's thanksgiving is, that since the scribes and Pharisees had been justly left without the special revelations of his doctrine, because of their hatred of the truth in the general form in which it was first proposed to them, he had chosen men esteemed neither "wise nor learned," men not skilled in the traditions and literature of their country, to be the depositaries of his revelations, and to render them by his teaching "wise and learned" above all the most celebrated rabbins of the Jews, and philosophers of the Gentiles. Thus "the excellency of the power" was "seen to be of God, not of man," because the administration of truths infinitely transcending the power of the highest and most cultivated human intellects to discover, was itself a proof that they were all "taught of God." The disciples are called *babes* both because of their unacquaintance with human learning, and more especially because of their docility and humility. Modestly distrustful of themselves, they awaited their Master's instructions with submissive, though often with perplexed minds.

Verse 26. *Good in thy sight.*—The word *ευδοκια* corresponds with the Hebrew רצה, and denotes the decision of the Divine will; but we are not to conceive of the will of God as arbitrary, but as founded upon REASONS of the highest wisdom and goodness. The WISDOM of the appointment, in this case, appears from the character of the agents chosen, whose want of human learning made the Divine teaching in them the more conspicuous, and more visibly stamped their doctrine as a revelation from God; as well as better provided for its pure communication to others. These were men less likely to AFFECT either reasoning or eloquence, and were therefore better fitted channels to convey truth in its simple majesty. And the GOODNESS was as conspicuous as the wisdom, because whatever most accredits Christianity as of Divine origin and authority heightens its influence and extends its blessings. To which may be added, that it is another affecting proof of the Divine benevolence, that he has made simplicity and prayer, which all may attain and use, the gates to the knowledge of the deepest truths of religion; and not human learning and genius, which fall to the lot of few. Into what rich, hallowing, and consolatory views of the truth of the Holy Scripture are those led, who, though neither "wise nor learned," according to the world's estimate, look up with simplicity to the fountain of inspiration himself, and read the sacred page with the sincere desire to DO as well as to KNOW "the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God!" To all such, "the entrance of the word giveth light;" and "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." See note on Luke x, 21.

Verse 27. *All things are delivered to me of my Father.*—Those who interpret this delivering of all things to Christ, of the universal "power given to him" as Mediator, break the connection of the discourse, and bring in an entirely new subject without necessity.

28 ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: [m] and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 [n] For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

[m] Jer. vi, 16.

[n] 1 John v, 3.

He had been speaking of the revelation of his doctrine by "THE FATHER," but he here states that this revelation from the Father was not immediate or distinct from his own teaching, but made entirely through himself. Hence *all things* mean, all things contained in this revelation; and *delivered* is to be taken in the sense of being *taught* a doctrine; a meaning which παραδουναι frequently has. So Mark vii, 13, "making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have *delivered*," or *taught*. Christ, therefore, received his doctrine from the Father, and revealed it to his disciples; yet not as the prophets, not as a mere man might receive wisdom from God, by inspiration. This supposition he excludes by the important and deeply mysterious words which follow; words which indicate a relation between himself, THE SON, and THE FATHER, which places an infinite distance between him and the greatest of the prophets. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father*, which it would have been even absurd to say, had the Son been a merely human being, and therefore as comprehensible as any other human being. There is a mystery in the Son which the Father alone knoweth. "For no one," says Origen upon this very text, "can know him who is uncreated, and begotten before every created nature as the Father who begat him, ως ο γεννησας αυτον πατηρ." And *no man knoweth the Father but the Son*, the persons in the Godhead alone being fully known to each other; and it is from this perfect and adequate knowledge of the Father which is possessed by the Son, that he is able to communicate with absolute clearness and certainty the will and counsels of the Father. Such is the basis of the infallibility of the teaching of Christ: as THE DIVINE SON, he fully knows the Divine Father; and of him and his designs he revealed all that was necessary to the salvation of men to his disciples, in order to its being taught to the world. It is therefore added, *and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*. There is no true knowledge of God but through the Son; and he who is taught of Christ sees "light in his light." Instead of *no man* and *any man*, in this verse, the rendering ought to have been rather, *no one* or *any one*; for every created being, and not man only, is excluded here from the *perfect comprehension* of the Father and the Son.

Verse 28. *Come unto me &c.*—Thus qualified to be the infallible guide of souls, our Saviour utters this public and universal invitation to every weary and heavy laden spirit. The *yoke* is the instrument by which oxen are subjected to their labour; the *burden* is a weight laid upon beasts or men; and the allusion of each is to the tradition of the scribes and Pharisees, by which the people were subjected to a variety of onerous and superstitious observances, which oppressed and galled the sincere but ill instructed seeker of salvation. Nothing indeed could so move the compassion of Christ, as the spectacle of many awakened souls, earnestly desirous of knowing what they must do to be saved, being directed only to those Pharisaic observances which, instead of giving them peace of mind, only cheated and deceived, and led to all the weariness of repeated disappointment. For what had these blind teachers to offer to troubled consciences? men who had given up the typical intent of their own sacrifices, by which it had been intended that faith in the great promised propitiation should always be maintained; and who had converted them into unmeaning and profitless ceremonies, besides multiplying the number of ritual observances beyond the requirement of their written law? They bound a harsh yoke upon the necks of their followers, and oppressed them with heavy burdens. Such are invited by Christ to come to him, and learn of him, to learn that which alone can meet their case, that he was the true sacrifice for sin, that an entire trust in him, by securing the remission of their sins, would give *rest to their souls*, and that thus being delivered from guilty fears, and assured of the Divine favour, and renewed in holiness, "his yoke," the yoke of his commandments, moral, spiritual, and practical, would be found easy, χρηστος, "benign, mild, and gracious;" and his "burden," whether of duties or restraints, founded in the nature and relations of man, and enjoining nothing but what is itself "good and profitable to men," would be "light."—Thus are we taught, that he only can find "rest to his soul," who comes to Christ as the true propitiation for his sins, in entire trust in the infinite merits of his sacrifice and mediation: and whoever has found this rest, runs with delight and joy the way of his commandments; which are so consonant with the holy principles that Divine grace has planted within him, so commend themselves to enlightened reason, and so manifestly and powerfully promote the peace of families, and the happiness of society, that

though Christ also has his *yoke*, and requires subjection to his authority, and his *burden too*, since every man must toil and labour in his service, yet conviction, love, and the strength of grace render the yoke easy and the burden light; and all his true disciples unite in the testimony, that his "service is perfect freedom."

CHAPTER XII.

1 Christ reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the Sabbath, 3 by Scriptures, 9 by reason, 13 and by a miracle. 22 He healeth the man possessed that was blind and dumb. 31 Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven. 36 Account shall be made of idle words. 38 He rebuketh the unfaithful, who seek after a sign: 49 and showeth who is his brother, sister, and mother.

1 At that time [a] Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were a hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read [b] what David did, when he was a hungered, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of

[a] Mark i, 23; Luke vi, 1; Deut. xxiii. 25.

[b] 1 Sam. xxi, 6.

CHAPTER XII. Verses 1, 2.—*On the Sabbath day through the corn, &c.*—The plural σαββασι is used for the singular; so in the LXX. שבת is rendered both σαββατον, and σαββατα. *Through the corn*, δια των σποριμων, through the corn fields, which often had public paths along or through them. The action itself of plucking the ears of corn was lawful, as appears from Deut. xxiii, 25: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn." The question then simply was, whether this action of the disciples was lawful on the Sabbath, which the Pharisees denied. They regarded plucking, as it would appear from Maimonides, as a kind of *reaping*, which, being servile work, was utterly prohibited on the Sabbath.—Very numerous and oppressive indeed were the regulations as to the observance of the Sabbath which the Jewish teachers had superstitiously grafted upon the original law; and our Saviour takes frequent occasion to show his disregard of them, in order to place the duty of observing the Sabbath upon its true ground, and thus the more forcibly to commend it to the convictions of reason and the regards of a true piety. As it stood in the decalogue, he came "not to destroy but to fulfil it;" but the other regulations respecting it, which the political laws of Moses contained, passed away with the Jewish polity itself; and as to those additions which were founded on mere human traditions, Christ by his own example has taught us that the Sabbath of the Lord, which is "a delight and honourable," is not to be converted into "a *yoke* of superstitious bondage." But, on the other hand, it is to be remarked, that the example of Christ guards with equal care the true limit of Christian liberty. It is not liberty to apply the Sabbath to secular purposes, or to spend it in sloth or pleasure. He himself devoted it to religion by teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath, and was probably on this occasion travelling from synagogue to synagogue with his disciples, when they, from mere hunger, plucked the ears of corn. Thus he has taught us to apply the leisure of the Sabbath to its sacred end, the worship of God, and attendance upon public instruction. Nor is there any instance of his giving the slightest sanction to worldly labour or listless recreation on that sacred day.—Works of NECESSITY, such as supplying the demand of hunger, and drawing a beast out of a pit, are the only examples of exception to which he refers for the justification of his own conduct; and works of MERCY, such as healing the sick, when actually present before him, are the only instances in which he suffered his own example to be pleaded for any seeming departure from its strict observance,—instances which only confirm the sanction of its hallowed character and universal obligation.

Verses 3, 4. *What David did when he was a hungered.*—The example to which our Lord here refers in order to silence the Pharisees shows that the case of the disciples was one of real hunger, not to be sustained without faintness and being unfitted for duty, as was that of David and his companions; and the argument is, that the law, rightly understood, never did exclude the consideration of such instances of necessity, and was therefore to be interpreted according to

God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, [c] but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read in the [d] law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, [e] I will have mercy, and not

[c] Exod. xxix, 33; Lev. viii, 31; xxiv, 9.

[d] Num. xxviii, 9.—[e] Hosea vi, 6; Matt. ix, 13.

the intention of the Legislator. "The shewbread" taken by David and his followers, consisted of twelve cakes, which were placed upon the altar of shewbread every Sabbath, the old cakes being at the same time removed and eaten by the priests "in the holy place."

Verse 5. *The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless.*—This was another argument from necessity as connected both with piety and charity. Had the law of the Sabbath been interpreted as rigidly as the Pharisees would have it understood; if "doing no manner of work," which evidently means work for secular advantage, was to be taken to signify an almost absolute cessation from bodily exertion; then the temple service must have been interrupted; the shewbread could not have been "set in order;" and the regular sacrifices, which were doubled on the Sabbath, could not have been offered. This was an argument which the Pharisees could not resist; for, first, our Lord appeals to the law, "Have ye not read in the law" that sacrifices are commanded to be offered on the Sabbath by *the priests?* who must therefore *profane the Sabbath;* that is, do that which but for this *authority*, and in respect of *the end* for which it was done, would have been a profanation; and yet, for these reasons, *are blameless.* And, second, as they no doubt held the opinion of their more recent doctors, that "the servile works which are done about holy things are not servile;" and that, as Maimonides expresses it, "there is no sabbatism at all in the temple;" so upon their own principles it followed that every work done on the Sabbath was not unlawful. The natural objection which the Pharisees would raise to this argument as intended to justify the disciples, would be, that the priests were exempted from the rest of the Sabbath in the temple, under the authority of Him who was greater than the temple, even God; for they esteemed nothing more holy and venerable than the temple, save God himself. This objection our Lord evidently anticipates in the next verse.

Verse 6. *In this place is one greater than the temple.*—Some MSS. read μειζον instead of μειζων, which makes the answer of our Lord to be, "a greater work" than the work of the temple is that in which my disciples are employed; and they are therefore entitled to be exempted, as well as the priests, from a strict sabbatical observance. This makes a plausible sense; but the MSS. in which the reading occurs are not of the first authority, and it does not accord with the context. The common reading is therefore to be preferred, and is established indeed by what follows,—"for the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Taking these passages together, they amount to a declaration, that Christ, being greater than the temple, was the Lord of the temple; and therefore God; and, as such, was the "Lord of the Sabbath day," having authority to institute it, to prescribe the rules of its observance, and to limit and relax them according to his sovereign pleasure. This conclusive argument, therefore, fully exhibited, is, that as you, the Pharisees, acknowledge that only he who is greater than the temple could relax the sabbatical law as to the service of the temple, and on this ground justify the servile works of the priests; I am "greater than the temple," and, as the "Lord of the Sabbath," have the right to permit my disciples to pluck the ears of corn and eat them on the Sabbath day; and they, as acting under my authority, like the priests of the temple, are "blameless." So explicitly does our Lord assert his Divinity! It is, however, to be observed, that our Lord argues here on the concession that the disciples had violated the strict rule of the Sabbath, as charged upon them by the Pharisees. Granting even that, he pronounces them "guiltless," as acting under his authority as "the Lord of the Sabbath," the Lawgiver himself; and he seems to have chosen thus to put the argument to give him an opportunity of asserting, in the midst of his lowliness and humility, the glory of his Divine Majesty: but the fact was, that, rightly interpreted, they had not violated the law at all, as he shows by justifying them on the principle, first, of necessity from the example of David, and then of *mercy*, by his quotation from Hosea vi, 6, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" so that on either ground he defended them from the inculpation.

Verse 7. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*—That is, when the claims of the one come into competition with those of the other. The last argument was peculiarly reproving to the Pharisees, who shamefully relaxed the laws of morality by their subtle

sacrifice ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

9 [f] And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14 ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and *held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And charged them that they should not make him known:

[f] Mark iii, 1; Luke vi, 6.

* Or, *took counsel.*

nterpretations, and set themselves at liberty to commit acts of rapacity and cruelty under the colour of sanctity and zeal, while they gave a proportionably rigid interpretation to every rule which respected external and ceremonial observances. This is a hypocrisy in which they have been often followed; for many in all Churches and in all ages have been found zealous for forms just in proportion as they have been regardless of practical holiness. Such are "the refuges of lies" into which the wilfully deluded consciences of men often fly for shelter; but from all which they must sooner or later be dragged by the "light which makes all things manifest." See notes on Mark ii, 23–28.

Verse 10. *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*—This was a question debated among the Jews; and many distinctions were set up as to the cases in which medicine might be lawfully prescribed, and those in which it would involve a breach of the Sabbath. The more rigid of the school of Shammai utterly forbade any attentions being paid to the sick on the Sabbath. The general opinion probably was, that to administer medicine was unlawful, except in imminent danger of life. This debated question, therefore, respecting the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath, was put to our Lord in the synagogue, with the desire of obtaining matter of accusation against him; for as it arose out of the circumstance of a man being present in the synagogue who had a "withered" or paralytic hand, here was a case in which there was no immediate danger of life, and should he heal him he might be proceeded against in their courts as a Sabbath-breaker.

Verse 12. *How much better is a man than a sheep? &c.*—It was held lawful to save their cattle from injury or destruction on the Sabbath: by how much, therefore, *a man is better than a sheep*, argues our Lord, so much more was it a duty to relieve a human being from pain and infirmity. *Wherefore it is lawful to do well*, καλως ποιειν, to confer benefits, *on the Sabbath days*, evidently meaning on the sick and infirm; and thus our Lord attacked a heartless superstition, by determining the lawfulness of healing or administering medicine to the sick, and paying them all attentions necessary to the alleviation of their case, on the Sabbath. In confirmation of his decision he healed the man with the withered hand, in the presence of all who were present in the synagogue, although he was in no immediate danger of life: he might be in pain, he was at least oppressed by an infirmity; and that was a sufficient reason for giving him instant relief.

Verse 14. *Held a council how they might destroy him.*—Συμβουλιον ελαβον, they took counsel, or consulted together, when they had left the synagogue. They might probably advise how they might found a charge of blasphemy upon his having declared himself "greater than the temple," and "the Lord of the Sabbath day;" but as the violator of the Sabbath was equally liable as the blasphemer to be punished with death, they would also endeavour to interpret the act of healing, in a case where no immediate danger of life was manifest, into this capital offence. That our Lord felt himself in danger from them, is plain from his departure to another place. There also, however, multitudes, still unperverted by the scribes and Pharisees, followed him; *and he healed them all*, that is, all the sick they brought out to him. See the notes on Mark iii, 1–6.

Verse 16. *And charged them, that they should not make him known.*—That is, that they should not declare him to be the person who had healed them; that they should not, as others had done, fill the country with his fame, and excite greater attention to him; but should quietly retire home, giving thanks

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 [g] Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon

[g] Isaiah, chap. xlii, 1.

indeed to God, but being silent before men. This was not enjoined either to disarm the rage of the Pharisees, as some have supposed, or, as others, to prevent their adding to their sins by avoiding all excitements to these renewed efforts to persecute and destroy him; but, as the application of the following prophecy shows, out of pure dislike to that clamorous and tumultuous popularity which everywhere followed him, and which he took every means, consistent with his public usefulness, to repress.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.*—On the authority of the inspired evangelist we are taught that this prophecy had a direct reference to the Messiah, and was truly fulfilled in our Lord. From it we learn that the Messiah was *God's chosen servant;* his *beloved*, in whom he is well pleased; that he was anointed of the Holy Ghost, *I will put my Spirit upon him;* that he should show *judgment*, that is, make a revelation of truth, for the word signifies a body of *doctrine*, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles; and that *in his name the Gentiles should trust*, should rely upon him for salvation, and find it in him. Now it was necessary that some marks should be exhibited by which the great personage who was appointed to confer such benefits should be known when he appeared upon earth, and these the prophecy distinctly sets forth. The first is the humble and unostentatious manner in which he should fulfil his great ministry: "*He shall not strive, nor cry*" in vehement contention with his opposers in support of his claims; *neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets*, in loud and boastful proclamation of them. The second mark is his tender condescension to the weak, the afflicted, and the lowly: *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.* To these particulars, inserted in the prophecy on purpose to make the Messiah manifest to the attentive observer when he should in fact appear, our Lord's conduct so strikingly corresponded, and in so natural and unaffected a manner that this agreement proves that he was the person intended in the prophecy. A dignified humility, an entire deadness to human applause, and the meekest submission to his whole appointed course of reproach and calumny, are among the most obvious traits of his character as a public teacher; and whether we take the beautiful figures which are employed by the prophet to illustrate his tenderness, as representations of the bodily or mental infirmities and afflictions of men, the application is equally convincing. Their first application to the corporal infirmities and almost expiring life of those our Lord healed, is obvious; but still more emphatically, *the bruised reed* is the emblem of the sorrow under which the spirit bows, as a reed which when bruised can no longer stand erect; hence, "to hang down the head like a bulrush," or reed, has become proverbial. The smoking expiring wick of the lamp, requiring a fresh supply of oil, represents the almost expiring state of the light of the truth in the minds of the Jewish people, approaching utter extinction, and calling for immediate attention to excite the flickering dying flame: both the figures too are taken from mean and common things, to indicate that the persons represented were precisely those whom the Jewish teachers most despised, the poor and humble. How many such characters came to Jesus during his sojourn on earth for help and deliverance! and which of them ever applied in vain? Bruised spirits, bent down by a sense of sin, or a weight of bodily suffering, and often both, were the objects of his special compassion; and innumerable were the monuments which he left throughout the land of his prompt and effectual pity. Nor with less sympathy did he regard the ignorance of a neglected people, in danger of having the last ray of truth extinguished in their minds from the want of proper instructers. In every docile and inquiring mind he trimmed the lamp of the understanding; and amid all the fogs and vapours of prejudices, which rendered the communication of truth difficult in itself, and trying to the patience of the teacher, as the kindling of a lamp where the wick is faulty and the atmosphere foul, he kindled that light which "guided their feet into the way of peace," and rendered many of them the guides of their nation and the world into the way of salvation. To our blessed Lord alone these characters belong, and they prove that the whole prophecy had respect to him. To apply it, as some have done, to Cyrus, or to the nation of Israel, has not the slightest plausibility; for of neither can any one of its particulars be affirmed, even in a primary and inferior sense. The Chaldee paraphrast and several of the Jewish writers regard it as spoken wholly to the Messiah; and "to no other person whatever," says Bishop Lowth, "can it with any justice or propriety be applied." St. Matthew's quotation differs from the Septuagint, but agrees with the Hebrew, in all but two clauses. "Till he have set forth judgment in the earth," is, in the evangelist, *till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

22 ¶ [h] Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?

24 [i] But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

[h] Luke xi, 14.

[i] Matt. ix, 34.

The sense is, however, the same; for to SET or establish judgment in the earth, and to bring forth or lead on judgment to victory, each obviously refers to the triumphs of his doctrine, משפט, the truth he reveals; for in the Old Testament it is used for the laws of God, his Divine laws and institutions, which should PREVAIL at length over all nations, through that very compassion and tenderness which brought under their influence so many of his own people, and trained them up to instruct others. *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust*, is, in Isaiah, "And the isles shall wait for his law." The evangelist here agrees with the Septuagint, which takes *the isles*, in an extensive sense, for any Gentiles, however distant; and to *wait for*, in the sense of to hope or trust, which the Hebrew word justifies. Thus the difference is only apparent, and arises from translation only.

Verse 22. *Blind and dumb.*—This instance of possession being accompanied both with blindness and the loss of speech, induced in consequence, probably, of the terrible power exerted by the devil upon the whole frame, rendered the sudden healing of this unfortunate man, by the expulsion of Satan, exceedingly remarkable; and as it produced great *amazement* among the people, so that they said, "Is not this the son of David?" and showed a disposition to acknowledge our Lord to be the Messiah in a tumultuary manner, so it excited the Pharisees to endeavour to countervail this impression, by spreading among the people the blasphemous theory they had adopted to account for his miracles, "*This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.*"

Verses 25–29. *And Jesus knew their thoughts, &c.*—As the Pharisees "said" this blasphemy, and that probably very openly, in order to prevent the people from acknowledging Christ, by their *thoughts* we must here understand their INTENTIONS. He knew that their purpose in devising this blasphemy was to prevent the people from forming a right judgment on the case, and he therefore calmly and convincingly refutes it. His first argument is drawn from the very policy of Satan. As a kingdom divided against itself, where one part seeks the destruction of another, cannot stand, so, *if Satan cast out Satan*, if one devil counteract another in his designs and acts of mischief, the Satanic kingdom is divided; its order and subordination, both of which it has, as being "a kingdom," managed on a regular system to a common end, to delude and to destroy, would be at once subverted, and by such intestine divisions it must fall. The second argument is from their own practice. *By whom do your children cast them out?* The children are the disciples of the Jewish teachers; for the terms "father" and "son" were often given by the Jews to master and scholar. Both before and after the time of Christ the Jewish exorcists cast out, or attempted to cast out devils, by "the authority of the great and fearful name." Whether or not, in some cases, God interposed in his mercy, and gave effect to their attempts, we know not; and the argument is equally strong on either supposition. They never attempted to cast out Satan by Satan, but by the name and power of the true God. They therefore acted upon the principle, that a kingdom could not be divided against itself; and they consequently relied upon a superior power, and that, the power of the Spirit of God. Either, therefore, the Pharisees must confess that their disciples were in league with Satan, to cast out devils, or they could not sustain their absurd charge against Christ, and must confess that if their children cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then that he also cast them out by the same Spirit. The

29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

31 ¶ [k] Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be for-

[k] Mark iii. 28; Luke xii, 10; 1 John v, 16.

force of this conclusion appears in the following verses.

Verse 28. *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then, &c.*—This was the certain proof that he had set up a KINGDOM among them, more powerful than the kingdom of Satan; *or else*, he adds, *how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man?* by which he shows his superior power. Thus our Lord declares, both that his kingdom is hostile to that of Satan, and that it is more mighty, since he was able at pleasure to bind the very head and ruler of this dark monarchy, and cast him out. This illustration sufficiently shows that when our Lord cast out devils, he exerted this power over Satan to indicate the spiritual conquests which he was to attain over the dominion of Satan in the hearts of men, and in the institutions of society. The ejection of devils from the possessed was the visible sign that "the kingdom of God was come unto them;" that kingdom which, by claiming redeemed men for its subjects, delivers them from the polluting and destructive tyranny of the devil, and restores them to spiritual health and liberty. Hence the guilt of the Pharisees was heightened. They contended, not merely against Christ, but against the kingdom of God itself, and all those glorious attestations of its establishment which resulted from the seal set upon it by the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit. In such a contest between the powers of light and darkness, between the mercy of God and the malice of Satan, even neutrality was a crime. *He that is not for me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.* How much more guilty then must be the enemies and opposers of this kingdom! and most of all those who, like the Pharisees, not merely opposed, but blasphemed the Holy Spirit himself, by ascribing those works by which he attested the mission of Christ, and the establishment of God's kingdom, to the agency of Satan! This leads our Lord to that awful declaration of the unpardonableness of this offence which is contained in the ensuing verses. See note on Luke xi, 14, 21.

Verses 31, 32. *All manner of sin and blasphemy, &c.*—The importance of a right understanding of this passage renders the most careful consideration of it necessary. *Sin* is the transgression of the law; *blasphemy*, when applied to men, is injurious and calumnious speaking; and when considered as a crime against the Divine Majesty, it consists in reproachful speeches uttered against God, or in a denial to him of those attributes and excellences which, according to the revelation he has been pleased to make of himself, he is known to possess; and thus in both cases includes in it the idea of wilful and rebellious enmity. For all such blasphemy there is, however, forgiveness upon repentance; but for that particular blasphemy which consists, as expressed in the next verse, in *speaking against the Holy Ghost*,—that is, saying, in opposition to all evidence, and against reasonable conviction, that the "Spirit of God," by which our Lord cast out devils, was the unclean and evil spirit, Satan himself, and doing this from enmity to the kingdom and truth of God, which by these miracles the Holy Spirit attested and established,—there is no forgiveness. Nothing can be more clear than that this is the unpardonable blasphemy of which our Lord speaks, and that these are the circumstances under which it was committed. *Blasphemy*, or speaking against the Son of man, was remissible; such as denying his Messiahship, calling him a winebibber and gluttonous, &c.; all which, though high and dangerous crimes, yet were not excluded from the Divine mercy. But when, after the Pharisees had always admitted, according to the faith of their nation, that devils could not be cast out but by the Spirit of God, and had seen how intimately connected all the works of Christ were with a holy doctrine and a holy life, they were so far influenced by their wicked passions as to resist that evidence of a Divine power in his case which they admitted in other cases, the cases of their own children or disciples, to be conclusive; and when they audaciously attributed that power exerted by Christ to Satan himself, of which they had sufficient proof, even upon their own principles, that it could only proceed from the Spirit of God, and yet, after all, wilfully and most wickedly, said of the power of the Holy Spirit, "This is the working of Beelzebub himself," this fatal offence was committed. Our Lord had thrown a veil around him by his humility, which often hid the glory of his majesty, so

given him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

that men might for a time question who he might be. Not so the Holy Spirit: he fully revealed himself in the works of Christ; so that had they been performed by the meanest of their prophets, the Pharisees would have acknowledged in them *the finger of God*, which now they denied; and therefore they sinned directly and wilfully against the Holy Ghost. This was their blasphemy and their crime, and our Lord solemnly declares that those who had been guilty of it should not be forgiven, *neither in this life, nor in the world to come*. This phrase is equivalent to, "Shall never at any future time be forgiven;" hence Mark expresses it, "Is in danger of eternal damnation." There is no reference in this expression to the notions of the Jews, that some sins would be forgiven to the seed of Abraham after death: for it is not probable that our Lord would seem to sanction so unscriptural an opinion by even an allusion: nor is "the world," or age "to come," to be understood, with others, of the age of the Messiah; for that had already commenced. The expression, as appears from similar phrases in the later Jewish writers, was proverbial for *never;* or, if there was in it any reference to a future state, it signifies that, as in this life that sin could not be forgiven, so, at the day of judgment, there could be no declaration of its having been forgiven, though the forgiveness of sins of every other description will then be made manifest and publicly proclaimed. So clearly is the nature of this sin marked, that it is somewhat surprising that there should have been so much difference of opinion respecting it. One of the least defensible notions is that which refers it forward to the rejection of the Gospel after the Holy Ghost had been shed forth in his miraculous gifts; whereas, the very occasion on which our Lord uses the words, and the particular character of the crime itself, which consisted in attributing the casting out of devils by the Spirit of God to the agency of Satan, proves indubitably that the sin might not only at that time be committed, but was actually so. The chief differences of opinion have, however, arisen, not from any difficulty in ascertaining in what the original crime consisted, but from the questions, how far others beside the Pharisees could be guilty of it; and from what its irremissibility arose. As to the first, it is difficult to say whether those Jews who might see the miracles of the Holy Spirit wrought by the apostles, and ascribe them to Satan, did not also commit precisely the same offence. They probably did; but still we have no authority for saying that this sin could be committed by any but the eye witnesses of the miracles themselves, or at least by those who fully admitted them as FACTS. We are likewise to recollect that there are blasphemies often committed against the Holy Ghost, of a deeply aggravated and dangerous nature, by infidels, and scoffers, and apostates, which are not THE blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and these are not to be confounded with it, though awfully criminal. As to the second question, in what the irremissibility of this sin consisted, perhaps it is best for us at once to confess our ignorance. Certain it is, that the pretended solution of those who make it merely a *consequence* of the nature of the offence, cannot be admitted, because in that respect it stands on the same ground as many other offences. The Pharisees, they tell us, by resisting the strongest evidence, put themselves beyond the possibility of being convinced of the truth, because no higher evidence could be given them: but this was equally true of all obstinate unbelievers then, though many of them were not charged with this particular offence; and it is also equally true of all unbelievers now, who have received all the evidence which God intends to afford. The only satisfactory conclusion on this awful subject is, that God was pleased to make this exception from the mercies of his Gospel as a warning to all mankind, who, if not capable of committing that precise sin, may all make dangerous approaches to it. It was designed to exhibit the evil of spiritual pride and bigotry; to show that there are sins of the INTELLECT and WILL, as well as of the senses, most hateful to God, because leading to a malignant opposition to his holy truth; and that a state of heart is attainable by perseverance in sin, from which the insulted Holy Spirit, after much patience, takes his everlasting flight, and leaves the sinner incapable of repentance. Still, while it operates as a warning, by showing how awful a degree of depravity man is capable of, there is no just ground for any apprehensions to be entertained by pious and scrupulous minds; for, not to urge that the fears of such persons are a sufficient proof that they have not committed this greatest of all offences, it may be confidently concluded that as those only are charged with the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost who saw the miracles of Christ performed, and yet attributed them to Satan, so no one in these later times can be guilty of this particular crime; and no one is, therefore, on that account, excluded from forgiveness. We have no right to enlarge an EXCEPTION from the mercies of the Gospel, beyond its strict LETTER. If any exception to a general rule demands a severely rigid

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? [1] for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

[1] St. Luke, chap. vi, 45.

interpretation, it is this which stands in direct opposition to the general character of the covenant of grace.

Verse 33. *Either make the tree good, &c.*—The connection of these words with the Pharisees appears to lie in their being an exhortation to them to put off the guise of hypocrisy, and to appear to be what they were in reality. As you have uttered blasphemy against God, pretend no more to sanctity and reverence for sacred things: either retract your blasphemies, or show that you are open mockers and contemners of God; for that you are so in reality, your conduct in reviling the Holy Spirit, rather than acknowledge a doctrine attested by him, sufficiently proves; *for the tree is known by his fruit.*

Verse 34. *O generation of vipers, &c.*—He compares them to the *εχιδναι*, the most deadly of the serpent brood, because of the malignity of their dispositions, and the fatal venom of their tongues. "The poison of asps" was truly "under their lips." And how many were infected by their slanders against Christ, and by that wicked hypothesis which destroyed the force of the evidence of the miracles of Christ, by accounting for them on the principle of Satanic agency, the increasing unsuccessfulness of his ministry was the awful proof. A ministry which commenced by making so general and favourable an impression upon vast multitudes, gradually seemed to excite little but prejudiced and malignant objections; except that now and then the people in some places, for a time, and but for a time, manifested somewhat of a more docile spirit. Yet were the scribes and Pharisees always at hand to wither every appearance of good. The poison of deadly serpents was not more fatal to life, than their blasphemies to the souls of men; and our Lord therefore adds, carrying on this allusion to their blasphemous slanders, *How can ye, being evil*, wholly evil, having evil substantiated in your whole nature, *speak good things? for out of the abundance*, *εκ του περισσευματος*, out of the exuberance, the overflowing abundance, *of the heart, the mouth speaketh*; that is, when the heart is so fully charged that it can no longer restrain, the mouth will declare the quality of the principles and passions by which it is so powerfully actuated; and thus, by the blasphemies uttered by the Pharisees, their true character was unveiled, and the full charged wickedness of their hearts wholly laid open.

Verse 35. *The good treasure of his heart, &c.*—*Της καρδιας* is wanting in so many MSS. and versions, that it was probably a marginal addition from St. Luke, where it occurs, Luke vi, 45. But the sense is not altered by omitting or retaining it. The treasure, or rather the treasury, is the heart; but the treasury is put metaphorically for what is contained in it. In the case of a *good man* there are laid up in the heart wisdom, holy principles, and all the benevolent affections; the heart of *an evil man* is a treasury, a receptacle charged with error, prejudice, sensuality, irreligion, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. The word *θησαυρος* does not necessarily convey the idea of value: that depends upon the quality of the articles collected and deposited. These may be "gold, silver, precious stones," "corn, wine, and oil," or "firebrands, arrows, and death;" the heart being often a magazine of all hurtful and deadly tempers and emotions, like that of the Pharisees here so strongly reproved. These our Lord calls *evil treasures.*

Verse 36. *Every idle word that men shall speak, &c*—The words here referred to are not those trifling and unprofitable words which are not meant to injure others, or to convey falsehood; for, however blamable these are, and often endangering to men's spiritual interests, and therefore to their souls, our Lord has still reference to the blasphemous slanders of the Pharisees, and to that state of the heart which renders it impossible for those he describes as *being evil* to speak *good things*, as the context shows. The primitive sense of *αργος* is *idle* or *useless*, from *a*, negative, and *εργος*, *work*. It is, however, itself a vague term, the sense of which must be determined by the context. Origen says that *αργος λογος*, in the language of logicians, was used to express a sophism or false reasoning, employed with a view to deceive. The meaning of our Lord appears to be, that, as for every *calumnious* word, the malice of which consisted in the design to make a false im-

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

38 ¶ [m] Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas:

40 [n] For as Jonas was three days and

[m] Matt. xvi, 1; Luke xi, 29; 1 Cor. i, 22.

[n] Jonah i, 17.

pression, which men may speak, they shall be condemned at the last day, so did the Pharisees render themselves liable to the just judgment of God by those blasphemous slanders in which they had indulged with the design of making him odious to the people. From this particular case he, however, according to his custom, deduces a great general truth. Words, as well as actions, are to be the subjects of solemn account at the last day; and the abuse of speech not less than the abuse of any other faculty shall subject men to condemnation. What account then will mere triflers give, men who spend life in useless talking and "foolish jesting," in singing vain songs, and framing vain witticisms? But still more severe will be the punishment of the censorious, of "lying lips," and especially of those whose tongues have been employed in uttering corrupt doctrines, misleading and destructive to the souls of men!

Verse 37. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, &c.*—Words as well as actions shall be exhibited as proofs of character, and be evidence in that day for or against every man; by them too, as far as words are the matter of judicial decision, he shall be *acquitted* or *condemned*.

Verses 38, 39. *We would see a sign from thee, &c.*—They probably meant, as they expressed it on other occasions, "a sign FROM HEAVEN." Perhaps they urge this as their apology for not being convinced by his miracles, as though greater power was required to produce some preternatural appearance in the atmosphere, than to raise the dead, or cast out devils, and to heal the sick by a word or touch; or, as though upon their own theory, as wicked as absurd, that Christ was in league with Satan, that mighty spirit could not as easily produce a portent in the heavens as any other miraculous work which they pretended to ascribe to him. Their fellow infidels, in all ages, have demanded different evidence from that which God has been pleased to give, and with the same insincerity. He who is unconvinced by proofs so stupendous as those on which Christianity rests, is an unbeliever, not for want of evidence, but from some evil bias upon his judgment and will, which no additional demonstration could remedy. Thus our Lord here traces the unbelief of the scribes and Pharisees to its true source: *an evil and adulterous generation*, pretending not to be convinced by miracles which have made manifest "the finger of God," still seeketh after a sign, and that in the same unbelieving spirit. The reason of this was, that they were *evil and adulterous*, as their polygamy, frequent divorces, and other sensualities, so general among them though covered by their hypocrisy, or defended by their immoral casuistry, sufficiently proved. Where such deep immoralities prevailed, immersing men in the very dregs of sensuality, unbelief was sufficiently accounted for, as well as their fierce hatred of the pure and self-denying doctrines taught by Christ.

Verse 40. *As Jonas was three days and three nights, &c.*—That the Prophet Jonah was a type of Christ is not to be deduced from these words. He was now, on this occasion, made by our Lord "a *sign*:" and the reason was, that our Lord, who now for the first time lays down his resurrection from the dead as the grand SIGN and DEMONSTRATIVE evidence of the truth of all his claims, chose, for obvious reasons, to speak of this event enigmatically, and to fix upon that part of the history of Jonah, his being three days and three nights in the belly of the fish which had swallowed him, so that his meaning might not be fully explained until after the event.

The whale's belly.—This is an unfortunate translation, both because neither the Hebrew nor the Greek term necessarily signifies a *whale*, but only *a great fish*, or sea monster; and because, in fact, whales are not found in the Mediterranean Sea, into which the disobedient prophet was cast. The shark, or the *lamia*, or *canis carcharius*, might be the fish employed on this miraculous occasion.

Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.—The *heart* of the earth is beneath its surface, as Jonah was said to be in "the heart" of the sea, though not in its middle or centre. A similar mode of speaking occurs in Ezekiel xxviii, 2: "Tyre, in the *heart* of the sea," because nearly surrounded by it, though not far from the land. The Jewish mode of computing time will explain the phrase *three days and three nights*, which according to our modes of reckoning far exceeds the time during which our Lord lay in the grave. With them, a day and a night was the same portion of time as a day; for, like us, they had no one word, says Bishop

three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: [o] because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

42 [p] The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear

[o] Jonah iii, 5.

[p] 1 Kings x, 1.

Pearce, by which to express a day of twenty-four hours, or a *νυχθημερον*, as the Greeks called it; that is a *night-day*. They sometimes called it a day, as we do; but at other times a day and a night, or a night and a day; so that we are to understand by the expression *three days and three nights*, three days as we should express it, reckoning inclusively the first and the last for two days, though only parts of days, and counting those parts of days for whole days. "A part," say the rabbins, "of an onah or Jewish day is as the whole." Thus in computing the circumcision of eight days, if the child is born an hour before the evening, when the day began, that hour of the day is reckoned as one whole day. Thus as to our Lord's remaining in the grave, Friday is reckoned one day, Saturday the second, Sunday the third; Saturday commencing on the evening of the Friday. He was laid in the grave a little before sunset on the Friday or the sixth day, which space being part of the day was reckoned as the whole; he continued there the night and day following, which was the seventh day; and rose again early on the first day, during a part of which therefore he was also in the grave, and this part according to the Jewish mode was considered as the whole; so that to say he was three days and three nights in the grave, was very easy to be understood, and created no difficulty with the Jews, or St. Matthew, writing after the resurrection, would doubtless have added some explanation.

Verse 41. *The men of Nineveh, &c.*—The mention of Jonah gave occasion to our Lord to contrast the obduracy of the Jews with the repentance of the men of Nineveh.—They believed the prophet's testimony, though a stranger and alone; and though he wrought no miracle, they repented; while the body of the Jewish people, greatly perverted in their judgment, and hardened against the evidence of truth, no doubt by the active opposition and influence of the Pharisees, repented not, although the Messenger sent was *greater than Jonas*, both in person and office; and the most stupendous miracles had been wrought in their sight; and, finally, though the message was at once a gracious offer of salvation, and a warning against severer judgments than those denounced against Nineveh. The Ninevites, though sinners, were, it seems, conscious that they were so; and the denunciation of Divine vengeance, therefore, made at once an effectual appeal to their fears: the Jews too were sinners; but "they trusted within themselves that they were righteous."

Rise up in judgment, &c.—This alludes to the custom of witnesses rising up from their seats, and standing in court to give their testimony: the men of Nineveh should condemn that *generation* of Jews at the general judgment, not as judges, but as witnesses; their obedience to the call of God under inferior religious privileges serving the more strongly to mark the aggravated guilt of a people among whom the Son of God himself had appeared.

Verse 42. *The queen of the south, &c.*—She is called the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x, 1. Sheba is placed by some in Arabia, by others in Ethiopia. Josephus says that Sheba was the name of the city of Meroe, and that it was thence that the queen here mentioned came. The Abyssinians have for ages, both before and after the Christian era, maintained that this princess was of their country, and that her posterity long reigned there; and many circumstances serve to give a strong probability to their claim, and especially the existence in that country, in ancient times, of a form of Judaism, which was in all probability introduced under the authority of some person of rank and influence; and none is more likely than the celebrated queen, who, travelling to so great a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon, showed herself to be a woman of wisdom and literary taste, and would probably take back with her copies of the sacred books. She is here commended by our Lord for her love of wisdom, of moral wisdom, for in that the philosophy of those ancient times chiefly consisted; and her example condemned the Jews, both because they not only had no desire after true wisdom, but were utterly averse to it; and because she received with docility instruction from the lips of a mere man, who, though great and wise, was inferior to Him whose ministry they proudly and malignantly slighted. That our Lord intimates under the modest phrase, *πλειον Σολομωντος*, that he was superior in nature to Solomon, as to the dignity of his person, cannot be reasonably doubted; for though the neuter gender be used, there can be no question, but the comparison is of *persons*, not of *things*.

the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 ᵠ When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell

ᵠ St. Luke, chap. xi, 24.

Verses 43–45. *When the unclean spirit, &c.*—This parable, founded upon the fact of demoniacal possessions, has been variously interpreted, and, for want of attention to the context, often either misunderstood or allegorized beyond all bounds of sobriety.—As it relates to the mysterious influence and habits of a class of supernatural beings, it partakes of the obscurity of the subject; but is, nevertheless, sufficiently obvious in its general import to convey the most solemn instruction. That some unhappy demoniacs were possessed with one evil spirit, others with more, as Mary Magdalene, who had seven, and the man near Gadara, of whom a legion had taken possession, are facts which appear in the Gospel history: and that it was not an uncommon case that a man who had been delivered from one demon, might after be possessed by many, is probable; because this is the basis, and constitutes the point, of the parable. This parable, separate from its application to the Jews, which shall presently be noticed, teaches us, 1. That these evil spirits are necessarily wretched: they "seek rest and find none," but carry with them their own hell. 2. That the only alleviation they know is the occupation of their attention by projects of mischief, which yet, as it heightens their guilt, must ultimately increase their misery. This is strongly represented by the clause, "he walketh through dry places," δι' ανυδρων τοπων, meaning deserts and parts of the wilderness which, as being without water, were not inhabited. Such solitudes afforded no opportunities for tempting men, and left the wandering, wretched spirit wholly to his own tormenting thoughts; he therefore is pictured as hastening back to the habitations of human society, in quest of objects on which to exercise his malignant power. His first effort is made upon the individual from whom he had been dispossessed; and the heart of this man being fitly compared to a house, *empty*, *swept*, and *garnished*, and thus fitted to receive inhabitants, he taketh others with him, who *enter and dwell there*. This indicates, 3. That though in some cases possession might be a mere calamity independent of any particular turpitude in the unfortunate subject; yet that such repossessions at least were occasioned by a relapse into sin, a submission to the dominion of bad principles and passions, which had vexed the Holy Spirit and obliged him to depart, and had left the man in a state as prepared to fall again under the power of Satan, as a house *empty* of an inhabitant, yet *swept* and *garnished* or furnished, was fitted to receive occupiers; so that the devil, as one quaintly observes, "takes possession only of ready furnished lodgings." 4. That the consequence of such a moral relapse was, that the former evil was increased sevenfold, and *the last state of that man made worse than the first*. Thus, in that day God sometimes punished sin by surrendering the offender more fully to the visible power of Satan.

The application of this parable, for such it is, though founded on what appears occasionally, in that age, to have occurred to the Jewish people, is now to be considered. *Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.* The parable, as supposing a previous better state, represented by the first ejection of the demon, can scarcely be confined to the scribes and Pharisees, though they might and probably did grow rapidly worse. Still they never appear before us but as the enemies of our Lord; and even as early as when they went to John's baptism they were called by him "a generation of vipers;" the very term just used respecting them by our Lord. It is therefore probable that the condition of the man in the parable, when the devil was dispossessed for a time, refers to that hopeful state of mind to which great multitudes of the Jews had been brought by the awakening preaching of John the Baptist, and the powerful early ministrations of our Lord; and from such beginnings, how different a result might have been expected! But the opposition and slanders of their teachers, operating upon the worldliness of the body of the people who were looking still for a secular Messiah, and upon their prejudices, had caused them generally to relapse into a state of enmity and opposition to truth; and they were thus prepared for a still deeper corruption of principles and passions, and were indeed rapidly sinking into it;—a moral state of obduracy, malignity, and wickedness, which might well be compared with that of a man possessed with *seven* evil spirits; and the history of the body of the Jewish people, who from this time went on increasing in wickedness, down to the destruction of Jerusalem, before which indeed "they filled up the measure of their iniquities," is an awful

there: [r] and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, [s] behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

[r] Heb. vi, 4; x, 26; 2 Peter ii, 20.

[s] Mark iii, 31; Luke viii, 20.

but most legible comment upon the prediction of our Lord, *So shall it be also unto this generation.*

This is the primary sense of the parable; but there are great general truths contained in it applicable far beyond the first design. It is a solemn admonition to all who relapse into sin after the turning of their hearts to God. Those evils from which they have been wholly or at least partially saved, if suffered to resume their influence and dominion, through unwatchfulness, worldliness, the neglect of duty, and the alienation of the heart from communion with God, come back with *sevenfold* force, and take possession of a heart thus *empty* of God, *swept* and *garnished* to receive evil, like a legion of evil spirits. Thus often every thing within "increases to more ungodliness:" blindness, insensibility, sensuality, pride, unbelief, fierce and fiery tempers, and all other evils—some of the old residents of the heart, and others new and introduced ones—assert their polluted and uncontrolled empire; the Holy Spirit is withdrawn; and the man, now under the full spiritual power of Satan, proves that his last *state is worse than the first.* "Watch and pray," says our Lord, even to his disciples, "lest ye fall into temptation."

Verse 46. *His mother and his brethren.*—Some think that the persons here called *brethren* were the sons of Joseph by a former wife; others, that they were the sons of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and sister of the mother of Christ; for cousins and other relatives were often, by the Jews, called brethren: but there is no sufficient reason for not considering them as the younger sons of Joseph and Mary; for the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is a figment. Who they were, is not a point of any importance: they were near relatives; and upon this the observation of our Lord turns. None are so near to him, none have so great a share in his kind affections, as those *who do the will of his Father.* Their intimate relationship to him he acknowledges now, and will finally proclaim it before an assembled world.

CHAPTER XIII.

3 *The parable of the sower and the seed:* 18 *the exposition of it.* 24 *The parable of the tares,* 31 *of the mustard seed,* 33 *of the leaven,* 44 *of the hidden treasure,* 45 *of the pearl,* 47 *of the drawnet cast into the sea:* 53 *and how Christ is contemned of his own countrymen.*

1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, [a] and sat by the seaside.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

[a] St. Mark, chap. iv, 1.

CHAPTER XIII. Verse 2. *And sat.*—It was the custom in the Jewish schools for the rabbi or doctor to sit and teach. Our Lord uniformly took the character of a public teacher, and SAT while delivering his longer discourses.

Verse 3. *In parables.*—"Parable," says Bishop Lowth, "is that kind of allegory which consists of a continued narration of a fictitious or accommodated event, applied to the illustration of some important truth." This species of instruction has indeed been found so convenient a mode of exhorting or dissuading, of praising or reproving, that few people have been wholly strangers to parables. In oriental nations they have always been held in great estimation, and they abound greatly in almost all Jewish writings. Parables are expressed by the Hebrew word משל; in Greek by *αινοι*, allegories or apologues; and in Latin by *fabellæ*, or fables. The Hebrew משל, however, comprehends not only those more extended narratives we call parables, illustrative comparisons of moral

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, [b] Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

[b] St. Luke, chap. viii, 5.

and religious subjects with those of common life, but all highly figurative speech, and sententious sayings. Thus παροιμιαι, or *proverbs*, and γνωμαι, or *maxims*, are included under it; and in the same latitude is the word parable used in the New Testament. Dr. Campbell judiciously distinguishes between the parable, taken in its stricter sense, and the apologue. In the former, "the action must be feasible, at least possible. Jotham's fable of the trees choosing a king is properly an apologue; because, literally understood, the thing is impossible. There is also a difference between parable and allegory. In allegory, every one of the principal words has, through the whole, two meanings, the literal and the figurative. Whatsoever is advanced should be pertinent, understood either way. It is not so in parable, where the *scope* is chiefly regarded, and not the words taken severally. That there be a resemblance in the principal incidents, is all that is required. Smaller matters are considered only as a sort of drapery," and ornament. It is not essential that the relation itself should be true history. It may be wholly imagery, though with a natural conformity to the events of real life, and the customs and opinions of the age. "Although," says Dr. Townson, "our Lord followed the example of other eastern teachers in the use of parables, he did it with a moderation and dignity becoming his character. He never introduces beasts of the field, or trees of the forest, debating and conversing together with the reason and faculties of men; nor does he bring forward emblematical persons, influencing their counsels and actions. All is built upon nature and life, and the reality of things, and composed of circumstances which every one perceived might probably happen. Once only, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the scene is laid beyond this visible world."

The beauty and perfection of our Lord's parables have been the subject of universal admiration. Even infidels have acknowledged their literary excellence, and the Jewish writers have often imitated them, though clumsily. The manner in which these parables of our Lord sink in passing through the hands of rabbinical writers affords indeed a strong presumption that he was eminently a teacher sent from God.—They are in every respect more than human. Certainly none of the evangelists who wrote his history, and recorded his discourses, could be the author of these exquisite productions, so fit in their selection of circumstances, expressed with so much brevity and perspicuity, and pointed with so much force to illustrate and apply the truth intended; all of which required a mental power, a universal knowledge, a mastery of the great truths discoursed upon, a calm and piercing wisdom, which they did not possess; and as for the wisest men among the Jews who have attempted that species of composition, the inferiority of composition as well as sentiment is at once discovered by the comparison. On the use of parables by our Lord, it ought also to be observed that, beside their fitness to awaken attention, and to give life and vigour to instruction, in his hands they were frequently employed for other important reasons. In many cases their meaning required either close study, or explanation from himself; and thus the sincerity of those who professed to be inquiring after truth was put to the test. In others our Lord shrouded those subjects in parables, and dark sayings, which could not be fully unveiled till he had completed his work on earth.—They were either of a nature too sacred for his malicious enemies fully to know, or such as his disciples were not yet prepared fully to comprehend; or they depended for their entire illustration upon the events of his death and resurrection. When they were remembered by his disciples after these events had thrown back their light upon his whole character, conduct, and discourses, they evidently afforded the strongest confirmation to their faith, as they do to ours; because we see one design running through the whole course of the mysterious conduct of our Lord while on earth, and one uniform body of *doctrine*, which he came into the world to teach, and to seal by his death.

Verse 4. *By the wayside, and the fowls came, &c.*—The *wayside* is the beaten footpath, which lay through the corn field.—Buckingham, in his Travels in Palestine, has the following passage, which is here worthy of remark: "We ascended an elevated plain where husbandmen were sowing, and some thousands of starlings covered the ground, as the wild pigeons do in Egypt, laying a heavy contribution on the grain thrown into the furrows, which are not covered by harrowing as in Europe." The grain on the wayside would be still more exposed to these depredations. St. Luke adds, as to the seed which fell on the wayside, that it was "trodden down."

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 [c] For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in

[c] St. Matthew, chap. xxv, 29.

Verses 5, 6. *Upon stony places.*—The meaning is, upon that part of the field where the rock beneath was covered with only a thin stratum of earth; where, by reason of the warmth, the seed sprung up too soon, and for want of root, and the nourishment afforded by the deeper earth, it withered away. Epictetus has a similar allusion, though not illustrative of the doctrine of the text: "When the very early heats come on, the husbandmen are anxious lest the seed should shoot out too soon, and then presently be nipped by the cold. So thou, O man! take care not to aspire to glory before thy time: you will be killed with the cold, nay, you are already dead at the root, though there be a little flourishing appearance above ground. We must ripen according to nature's rule and order."

Verse 7. *Thorns.*—Under this word are comprehended briers, weeds, and every other worthless plant which infests neglected fields, and chokes the growth of the grain.

Verse 8. *Some a hundred-fold, &c.*—The ground which yielded these returns was *good* and deep, and kept free from weeds; but not equally rich; yet, in all, the produce was abundantly remunerative. A hundredfold increase was probably not the usual return on the best soils of Palestine, fruitful as it was; but still sufficiently common to justify the terms of the parable. Thus Isaac sowed in the land of the Philistines, "and received in that same year a hundredfold," Gen. xxvi, 12. Pliny states that Sicily and Egypt easily produced a hundredfold; and that from Africa four hundred stalks were sent to Augustus, raised from one grain, and three hundred and sixty to Nero.

Verses 10–13. *Why speakest thou to them in parables? &c.*—This is the first instance, recorded by St. Matthew, of Christ's speaking in such parables as required explanation, and of his reserving that to his disciples in private. Many parables, either of the longer or shorter kind, he had already spoken in the presence of the multitudes, the meaning of which being sufficiently obvious, the disciples did not feel it necessary to make farther inquiries of him in private as to their purport. Here, however, they plainly perceived that he did not intend fully to explain himself indiscriminately to his hearers; which led them to ask the reason of this new practice. Connecting this circumstance with what he had a little before said of the rapidity with which that "*generation*," the body of the people who had attended on his ministry, had been becoming of a worse disposition, more opposed to his doctrine, and more at enmity with his person and work, we see the force of the reason he assigns for not speaking to them so clearly as formerly, on subjects for which they had less reverence, and which only provoked in many the enmity of the carnal heart. To the disciples therefore *it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, those doctrines which had been kept secret from former ages, but which Christ was now appointed to reveal; but *to the others it was not given.* Why? *Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, nor understand.* They had *seen* the greatest miracles, yet, as though they had not seen them, remained unmoved and unconvinced; and they had *heard* the doctrines of Christ, and were as though they had not heard them,—they had not only paid no attention to understand them fully, but, as far as they knew them, they had rejected them; their case therefore had become hopeless, and they were now by a righteous decision, grounded upon a principle of the moral government of God, deprived of the advantages they had abused, at least in part, and preparatory to their total dereliction. That principle is laid down in verse 12, *For whosoever hath*, HATH PROFITABLY, implying a previous use of what had been imparted, *to him shall be given, and he shall have greater abundance* of instruction, illumination, and grace. This was the case with the disciples: having improved their

parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, [d] By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes,

[d] Isaiah vi, 9; Mark iv, 12; Luke viii, 10; John xii, 40; Acts xxviii, 26: Rom. xi, 8.

opportunities of attending on Christ's ministry, with humbleness of mind, and sincerity, they were finally led "into all truth," and made partakers of the full salvation of the Gospel. *But whosoever hath not*, in the sense of profitably improving what had been communicated, *from him shall be taken away even that he hath; that* which was imparted for his edification and salvation: he shall be *utterly* deprived of those means and opportunities of salvation which he has neglected and slighted. This was accomplished in the unbelieving Jews, whose means of illumination, through his teaching, Christ now began to diminish, and from which they were at length entirely shut out. Thus they became a standing warning to all in future time to whom the offers of salvation by Christ should be sent; for whoever despises or neglects such advantages, shall either finally see them withdrawn, or be suffered to sink into an obdurate and blinded state of mind which shall render them all inefficacious.

Verses 14, 15. *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias.*—This prophecy is in Isaiah vi, 9, 10. This quotation of St. Matthew nearly agrees with the Septuagint and with the Hebrew in sense, although the imperative verbs in the original are taken by the evangelists as indicatives. In thus following the Greek translation they show how the Hebrew mode of speaking, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," was understood by the Jews; that they express not what the prophet would do himself, but what he would be the innocent occasion of being done; not what God designed to do or to be done, but what he, by virtue of his prescience, knew that the people would do themselves upon hearing the prophet's message. The words were not only so understood by the translators of the Septuagint, and the evangelists; but also by the Chaldee paraphrast, and since by D. Kimchi and other Jewish commentators. As to the slight variation between the evangelists and the LXX., it may not only be again observed that the copies they used were in a more perfect state than the present; but also that as this version had only human authority, they did not servilely follow it. They had evidently in many of their quotations the Hebrew text before them, and often, probably, rendered that into the Greek of their own gospels, with more respect to the sense than to a literal translation. The words of Isaiah have been represented by many as having no other relation to the case of the Jews of our Lord's time, than as expressing a strong resemblance between their character and those of the people to whom Isaiah was sent. The formula by which St. Matthew introduces it, is indeed less strong than in some instances already noticed; yet no argument can be built upon that, since it is one which declares a direct accomplishment of Isaiah's words in the event. The compound verb *αναπληροω*, may not indeed, as some have thought, signify that these words were *again* fulfilled in the days of Christ, and may be allowed to have no more force than the verb in its simple form; but that our Lord refers to Isaiah's words as a *prediction* accomplished in the Jews of his own age, as well as in those of the age of the prophet, rests upon stronger ground than verbal criticism. It is one of that class of prophecies which relate to a twofold event. It referred, first, to the obduracy of the Jews in rejecting God's messages by his prophets until they were overtaken by the Divine judgments, so that "the cities should be wasted without inhabitant," &c., an event which certainly followed in the desolation of the country by the army of Babylon. But to the same quotation used by St. Matthew, St. John adds, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," that is, of Christ; a sufficient proof that the inspired evangelists considered the prediction as referring ultimately and in the highest sense to the perverse conduct of the Jews, after the manifestation of the Messiah, which again issued in the destruction of their cities, and "the removing of men far away," and a "great forsaking in the midst of the land," according to the prediction. That it is a prophecy, uttered when the prophet had a view of "the glory of Christ," we have the express testimony of the evangelists; and if so, it could only be a prophecy of the Messiah's rejection by the Jews, and their subsequent punishment as a nation.

By hearing ye shall hear.—Ακοη ακουσετε. This has been thought a Hebraism, and that the repetition forms a strong affirmation, —"Ye shall certainly hear," &c. But it is a proverb not confined to the Jews. So Demosthenes: Το της παροιμιας, ορωντας,

and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, [c] That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them;* and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them.*

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one,* and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

[c] St. Luke, chap. x, 24.

οραν, και ακουοντας μη ακουειν, "As the proverb, Seeing not to see, and hearing not to hear."

Their heart is waxed gross, &c.—A gross or fat heart is a metaphor taken for that stupidity and sloth which is the result of sensual indulgence. To this is added, *Their ears hear heavily, and they have closed their eyes.* Here we have a most graphic illustration of a fat, sensual, besotted man, oppressed with gluttony and riot; who, scarcely half awake, is made to hear sounds which rouse not his heavy hearing, and listlessly to open his eyes upon some object, and drowsily again to close them; so that no thorough impression is made upon his understanding, and he has no perception of what he is reluctantly roused to behold, and understands not the sounds he hears; only that he is provoked at being disturbed. That state of indolent inattention, and carnal aversion to the spiritual doctrines of Christ, exhibited by a people besotted by their prejudices and their sins, is thus in a most striking manner portrayed.

Should be converted, and I should heal them.—Should turn to God, and obtain salvation; for conversion is in the New Testament used generally in the sense of an effectual turning of the will and affections to God, so as to SEEK him, which is the more common phrase of the Old Testament. To be HEALED expresses the moral restoration of the soul to the favour and image of God; a figure common in all languages. Thus in Mark this clause is expressed paraphrastically: "And their sins should be forgiven them."

Verse 16. *But blessed are your eyes, &c.*—That is, HAPPY are you, because *your eyes see,* and *your ears hear:* your eyes and your ears, your attention and understanding, being rightly employed, are become the means of your true and eternal happiness.

Verse 17. *Many prophets and righteous men, &c.*—St. Luke says, "Prophets and kings," because many of these righteous men were of elevated rank, as Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses, David, and Solomon. The words, however, include all the ancient saints, who earnestly desired to see Messiah, to hear his words, to receive that fulness of grace which they knew he was appointed to convey, to understand more clearly those evangelical mysteries which were hidden under the veil of symbolical prophecies and types, and to witness the establishment of his kingdom. "These all died in the faith" that the great promise would be fulfilled, but were not permitted to witness it. "Prophets," says Maimonides, "have wished for the days of Messiah; and excellent men have eagerly expected them." See note on Luke x, 24.

Verse 19. *And understandeth it not.*—Συνιημι properly signifies "to consider, think, lay to heart."

The wicked one.—St. Mark says, "Satan cometh immediately," and *catcheth away that which was sown.* Here the promptitude of the enemy,—*he cometh* IMMEDIATELY, and his hastily SEIZING and GATHERING UP the seed, forcibly express the malignant industry of Satan, and his eagerness to turn away the attention of men from the salutary truths they hear, lest they should make an effectual impression, and, like seed, strike root in the soil of the conscience and affections. He is well aware how fatal to his dominion over the soul a careful and serious consideration of the import of the word of God must prove, and therefore sets himself at once to prevent it. Our own prejudices, levity, sloth, or the distractions produced by outward things, have this tendency; but upon all these, as instruments, the busy hand of the destroyer of souls is always laid to give them an efficacy for evil which they would otherwise not possess.

This is he which received, &c.—The phrase in the Greek is elliptical; and ουτος εστι seems to denote this is the character signified by the seed sown by the wayside.

Verses 20, 21. *Anon with joy, &c.*—He receives it ευθυς, *immediately,* or forthwith, *with joy,* delighted with its novelty, and, through susceptibility of mind, feeling its force, beauty, and truth. *Yet hath he not root in himself;* no deep conviction of his sinfulness and danger; no proper conception of the sacrifices which truth must cost him,

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it;* which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

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and of that entire renunciation of the world which he is called to make in order to his becoming a true disciple; no strong principle of decision, no such abiding consciousness of his own weakness as to lead him to earnest prayer for Divine help, and to constant vigilance. *He endureth therefore for a while;* he maintains his profession of discipleship; but when suffering for the truth comes, he shows how superficial is his love to Christ and his cause, and *he is offended;* difficulties and persecutions make him repent his choice, and, like a man in a rough and rocky path, he stumbles, and falls, and hastens to leave a path charged with such obstructions and discouragements.

Verse 22. *Seed among thorns, &c.*—This represents a character of a higher class than either of the former. The seed takes root; and that, too, where there is depth of earth. The persons intended, therefore, have root in themselves; a true faith in Christ; and such love to him and to his truth, that they are not charged with shrinking from "the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the word." They fall by slow degrees, and by an enemy more subtle in its approaches than persecution,—by the cares of the world, its distracting anxieties, and the deceitfulness of riches. These awaken the craving spirit, which longs to possess wealth, either to spend in luxury, or to hoard for security, and so *choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful;* for in a mind so intent upon earthly things, so anxious to escape the measure of affliction which Divine providence may in its wisdom appoint, and to attain a degree of prosperity and distinction which it may in the exercise of the same wisdom and goodness design to withhold, the vitality of every gracious principle must be languid; faith, hope, and spirituality all rapidly lose their vigour and influence; prayer becomes distracted and formal; intercourse with God, which can only be maintained by a calm, watchful, and subjected spirit, is lost; and moral dearth is the necessary result. *The deceitfulness of riches,* απατη του πλουτου, is a strongly admonitory phrase; for it indicates not merely that riches promise more satisfaction than they give, or, after tempting men to an ardent pursuit, they suddenly elude their grasp, and so in either case *deceive;* but that the worldly spirit approaches those who have been truly brought for a time under the influence of religion, in various seductive and delusive forms, which throw them off their guard. A prudent provision for the future, so as to banish care, and not increase it, is one; the increase of our ability to be liberal, another; the additional influence which may be acquired and employed in favour of the cause of Christ, the greater leisure which may be commanded thereby to employ in works of piety and usefulness, with various other plausible suggestions, are apt to disarm the mind, and open the way to strike a fatal blow at the spiritual habits which may have been acquired by kindling the keen desire of gain. How many have been deluded here! They have surrendered themselves to the ardent pursuit of wealth, and have in some instances attained it; but sordid cares have increased, not diminished; the appetite has become more voracious with that by which it has been fed; and liberality and sacrifices of time for the public good have become more stinted and grudging. Other and new temptations have come in: hence St. Luke adds to the deceitfulness of riches, "the pleasures of this life," to which riches so often prompt as they afford the means of gratification; "and the lust of other things," desires after honour, distinction, show, and the praise of men. Thus men are deluded into sin, and truly prove that the growth of the good seed has been choked in them by THORNS and BRIERS, by WEEDS and POISONS. "Worldly cares," says an old writer, "are fitly compared to thorns; for as they *choke* the word, so they *wound* our souls; neither can the word grow *through*, nor the heart rest *upon* them." If God in his providence make a man rich, let him rather tremble than rejoice; for then indeed he will have need to pray that he may prove a faithful steward.

Verse 23. *Good ground.*—Not only deep earth, prepared for the seed by the ploughing, but kept free from weeds by diligent and watchful labour.

Understandeth it.—So considers it and meditates upon it; maintains in his mind so deep and lively a conviction of its excellence and supreme importance, as to apply it to practical ends, both in the regulation of his heart and conduct. Hence in St. Luke it is, "And keeps it in an honest and good heart;" a heart rendered so by the grace of God communicated through previous religious advantages,—as the word of God contained in the Jewish Scriptures, or the preaching of John the Baptist,—and maintained and perfected by the word of Christ, KEPT within it. *And*

24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him,

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bring forth fruit with patience; with persevering resistance to all temptations, to a strong and unyielding endurance.

Some a hundredfold, &c.—All are fruitful; but some, from the enjoyment of superior opportunities, and furnished also with stronger natural capacities, and placed in circumstances to call forth the visible expression and activity of their inward principles of faith, love, and zeal, *bring forth a hundredfold.* This parable appears to have been specially intended for the instruction and admonition of Christ's disciples. It explained to them the reason why so many of his hearers, who had given hopeful symptoms of incipient piety in the commencement of his ministry, had degenerated into indifference or opposition; and it was a solemn caution to those who still continued in the profession of discipleship and followed him. The next parable prepared them for that mixed state of his own visible Church which was to be more fully displayed in future times.

Verse 24. *A man which sowed good seed in his field.*—The sower, as we are taught by our Lord's own explanation of this parable, is the *Son of man,* disseminating truth by his own ministry, and through that of his servants, whose strength and success are derived from him. *The good seed are the children of the kingdom;* those who in truth receive his whole doctrine, and come under his spiritual rule: a brief but clear description of real Christians.

The field is the world.—This evidently means the Church in the world, the Christian Church, which was shortly to be extended into all nations of the whole civilized world. This Church, in truth, wherever it is planted, only consists of "children of the kingdom;" but Satan has always introduced others of an opposite character within its visible pale.

Verse 25. *But while men slept, &c.—The enemy,* says our Lord, is the devil, the father not only of all openly profane persons, but of all false professors of Christ's religion. The *men* represent the ministers and members of Churches, whose want of due attention to the cultivation of a decided piety, and the upholding of a godly discipline, greatly increased an evil, the corruption of the Church, which even vigilance could not wholly have prevented. This we may collect from the case of Judas, who was a tare sown among the true disciples even in the time of our Lord. Still, had not great lukewarmness prevailed, and a disposition to rest in the outward exercises of religion; and had that tone of spirituality continued which marked the Church immediately after the day of pentecost, and fixed the attention of all wholly upon the religion of the heart, and subordinated all forms and circumstances to that alone; the field would have been well guarded by *the servants* against *the enemy,* and little encouragement would have been found in such a state of the Church for false or even superficial professors to have connected themselves with it. The kind of plant called ζιζανια, by us translated "tares," has been disputed. That the *zizania* did not at all resemble our tare or vetch, which is a useful plant, is evident from their being gathered at the harvest and *burned.* The word is not mentioned in any other part of Scripture, nor in any ancient Greek writer; but a similar word זונים is found in Jewish writings, and is described to be a degenerate and worthless kind of weed, bearing, however, a strong resemblance to corn. Others take it to be the darnel, "*lolium temulentum,*" which is called *zuvan* by the Arabs. Travellers state that "in some parts of Syria the plant is drawn up by the hand in the time of harvest along with the wheat, and is then gathered out, and bound up in separate bundles." In this parable our Lord alludes to the same circumstance. These worthless plants sprung up among the grain; they were suffered to grow up with it; and in the time of reaping they were separated by hand, bound up in bundles, and burned as fuel.

Verse 26. *But when the blade was sprung up, &c.*—In the first stage of vegetation the difference was not so marked as to awaken attention among the unsuspecting and somewhat inattentive *servants;* but when *the fruit* of each *appeared,* it was so opposite in character that it could no longer pass unnoticed.

Verse 27. *The householder.*—The master of the family; the proprietor of the field.

Verses 28, 29. *Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest, &c.*—The chief point of difficulty in this parable lies in this question of the servants, and the answer of the master. Some make

Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the

a distinction between thorns, briers, and obvious weeds, which they say ought to be extirpated, and the plant here mentioned; which, on account of its similarity to the wheat, so that it could not be plucked up without danger, ought to be treated with greater tenderness; but it is clear that, when the servants made their complaint to the master, the similarity had passed away, and each plant, the wheat and the zizanion, having attained more mature growth, was known by its *fruit*. Others think that we are cautioned against pushing discipline in Churches too far, lest by mistake the good wheat should be *rooted up also*; but this affords no reason at all why the plants which could be easily distinguished by their very *fruit*, should be suffered to remain growing together; and would afford an argument, not against too rigid a discipline, but against discipline of every kind. That this could not be the intention of our Lord, we have decided proof in the conduct of his apostles as to the moral regulation of Churches, and in those disciplinary directions they have left in their epistles. St. Paul commanded the Corinthians, by his apostolical authority, to "put away" an immoral person, and strongly reproved them for their supineness in the case. Christians are prohibited from "eating" with such characters; that is, from receiving the Lord's Supper in their company; by which they refused all communion with them. A heretic, after suitable admonition, is to be "rejected;" and St. John forbids those to whom he writes "to receive" false teachers, or to bid them "God speed." All these are obvious instances of separation from the fellowship of saints. It is clear, therefore, that we must seek another solution. Our Lord is to be understood as prohibiting all civil coercion, and every species of persecution, on religious grounds; all infliction of punishment upon men by his *servants*, his ministers, which should be *a rooting up* of the tares, and thus doing the work of the harvest before the time of harvest, a work reserved to Christ alone. The parable must therefore be understood as not referring at all to questions of Church DISCIPLINE. The seeds of evil, early sown in the Church, sprung up at length into innumerable heresies and immoralities, and that under the Christian name; and so long as the civil power was arrayed against Christianity, the only defence of the purer portion of the Church was its own legitimate ecclesiastical power to reprove and to separate offenders from its communion; though this began to be done even at an early period, too often in a spirit which indicated that if greater power had been at command, it would have been unmercifully used. A new state of things arose when the civil power lent itself to obey the call of ecclesiastics, to give greater force to these excommunications by the infliction of pains, penalties, and finally death; and it is a remarkable fact, and one to which our Lord in this parable may be supposed particularly to refer, that for so long a period of time even those ministers who were best entitled to be called *the servants* of the master of the field were the advocates of civil coercion in matters of religion, and asserted the right of the magistrate to employ the sword to punish offenders against the doctrines and the rules of their respective Churches; a principle which has indeed been renounced, though even still but partially, in comparatively modern times. For many ages almost all ministers, good or bad, advocated the violent rooting up of the tares by the arm of power, regardless of the lesson taught them in this parable; and if any thing more than its own internal evidence were necessary to convince us of the profound wisdom of this lesson, the proof which history has afforded of the utter unfitness of weak and passionate man to wield the rod of the Almighty, for ever establishes it. "Lest ye root up with them the wheat also," says our Saviour; and the fact has been, that, with few exceptions, religious persecution, in all its degrees, has in all ages been more fatal to the wheat than to the tares; and that in an immense number of cases, under the pretence of destroying the tares, the wheat alone has been the object of this blind and perverted violence. The proud persecuting spirit is wholly of Satan; and when he impels his agents into the field to root up and destroy, he will generally take care of the plants of his own sowing; or if he sacrifice a few of them, it will be with the design to give a colour to a coercive and political process, by which, in the final result, the good grain shall chiefly suffer. Every Church of Christ has the right, nay, the duty is imposed upon it, of separating from its communion all who hold fundamental error, or lead an unholy life, after due admonition, and with tender charity; but to separate men from the Church in order to punish them,—the work of Christ at the *harvest*, which is *the end of the world*, and his work alone,—is a matter which, though often dictated by a forward and blind zeal, is here wholly prohibited. Grotius has showed that Augustine, Chrysostom, and Jerome applied the forbearance recommended in this parable to heretics. Augustine concluded from it that no punishments should be inflicted upon them; and

harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, [f] The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 ¶ [g] Another parable spake he unto

[f] Mark iv, 30; Luke xiii, 19.

[g] Luke xiii, 20.

though the Donatists made him so far accede as to allow of those punishments which admitted of time for repentance, he continued often to interpose to avert sentences of death. Constantine, in his first edicts, gave all Christians the liberty of worshipping God according to their conscience; but he afterward imposed penalties, chiefly pecuniary fines, on those who separated from the dominant Church. The succeeding emperors were more or less strict in this respect, as it suited their temporal interests; but all were averse to capital punishments. Thus the bishops in Gaul, who put the Priscillianists to death, were censured and excommunicated; and the council in the east was condemned, which burned Bogomilus, Arius, Mecedonius, Nestorius, and Eutyches suffered nothing beyond banishment. The Arian emperors, and the kings of that sect in Africa, appear to have been the first who embrued their hands in the blood of their opponents. Thus gradually did the caution of this merciful parable lose its influence over the minds of professing Christians; and the barbarities of futures times, induced by the "accursed ungodliness of zeal," have infixed the foulest blot upon the history of our religion.

Verse 30. *The reapers.*—These, says our Lord, are *the angels*, not men having infirmity, pride, passion, prejudice, selfishness, but perfectly pure and holy spirits, and yet these act under the direction of the Son of man, who appears in his glory, is PRESENT at the final separation, which, being thus performed under his own eye, secures even angels from mistake. These are to *gather out of his kingdom all things that offend*,—all those errors and evils which have been as stumbling blocks to unbelievers, and made "the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the Gentiles," especially all teachers of these false and corrupting doctrines,—*and them which do iniquity*, under whatever guise or pretence; so that from this time of separation, so awful in its results to those who have unworthily borne the name of Christ, the universal Church of true believers shall be free from spot, and shall *shine forth like the sun* in the unsullied light of truth and holiness, *in the kingdom of their Father*. Verses 41–43.

Verse 31. *A grain of mustard seed, &c.*—The intention of this parable is to set forth the large increase of the kingdom of Christ from small beginnings: it is another of those prophetic parables which have been, beyond all question, illustriously accomplished; and it is still receiving a not less striking fulfilment in the spread of Christianity into heathen countries to this day. The seed is said to be *the least of all seeds*, and *to become a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make their nests in its branches.* "This will not appear strange," says Sir Thomas Brown, "if we recollect that the mustard seed, though it be not simply and in itself the smallest of all seeds, yet may be very well believed to be the smallest of such as are apt to grow into a ligneous substance, and become a kind of tree." Scheuchzer describes a species of mustard which grows several feet in height. Of this arborescent vegetable he gives a print; and Linnæus mentions a species whose branches were ligneous. "I have seen plants of mustard," says Mr. Scott, "in the deep rich soil of some low lands in Lincolnshire, larger than most shrubs, and almost like a small tree. Probably in eastern countries, it is the largest plant from the smallest seed that has yet been noticed." But whatever might be the species intended by our Lord, it is clear from the fact that he was accustomed to take his illustrations from familiar objects, that he spoke of a plant which was remarkable among his hearers for the smallness of its seeds, and which yet attained so large a growth as to afford shelter for the birds of the air. Hence, "as a grain of mustard" was a proverbial expression among the Jews for smallness; and in the rabbinical writings the mustard plant is mentioned as a tree growing to a size and strength that a man might ascend into it. The comparatives, μικροτερον and μειζον, are used for superlatives.

The object of this parable was not only to place on record a prophecy the accomplishment of which should be an evidence of the truth of our Lord's mission, but also to afford encouragement to his disciples in their great work of planting the Gospel. However small and discouraging the commencement of their work in any place might be, they planted a seed which contained within itself the capacity of large and wonderful increase. So it has proved in every land, and in every heart

them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three * measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 [h] All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, [i] I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one;*

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; [k] the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all * things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 [l] Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

* The word in the Greek is, *a measure containing about a peck and a half, wanting a little more than a pint.*—[h] Mark iv, 33.—[i] Psalm lxxviii, 2.—[k] Joel iii, 13; Rev. xiv, 15.—* Or, *scandals.*—[l] Dan. xii, 3.

where it has been in truth received and diligently cultivated.

Verse 33. *Like leaven.*—The former parable was designed to illustrate the public and visible growth of Christ's religion; this, its secret and powerful operation in the soul of man, and in the moral state of society. Its influence is invisible, often slow; but it exerts a secret activity, conveying its own properties progressively, until, like the measures of meal, the whole mass is leavened. This must become matter of personal experience, that no principle of action, no affection of the soul, no temper, no thought, word or action shall escape that influence of the Gospel, the effect of which, when not wilfully counteracted, is to assimilate every thing to its own charity and purity. In the world the process, from the vastness of the mass, will be slow; and yet, what reflecting mind can fail to remark with joy, that, wherever the great truths of our Divine religion are fully and faithfully preached, how certainly, and often indeed rapidly, do great moral changes in the state of society follow?—a higher standard of judging as to right and wrong, a stricter regard to justice, a corrected state of morals, a more liberal benevolence, kindlier feelings, manliness of intellect, and an ameliorated state of the social affections. Let this encourage the exertions of the disciples of Christ. The elements of these mighty changes are not often brought into the calculations of the philosopher or the statesman; but they are silently placed amid the thoughts and consciences of men, and exert there a growing influence. Far off may be the desirable consummation; but the leaven is silently at work; and the vast mass of the human race shall be ultimately brought under its influence.

Three measures of meal.—The σατον, or measure, was about a peck and a half, English; and three measures were probably the quantity usually leavened at one time for domestic use.

Verse 35. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.*—This quotation is from Psalm lxxviii, 2; an inspired ode, which is attributed to Asaph, who is called, 2 Chron. xxix, 30, "Asaph the seer," or prophet. The subject of this psalm is the history of God's dealings with the Jews, until he raised up David to be their shepherd; and as this history is that of a typical people and a typical king, it looks forward to the Christian dispensation, and to Christ the King of his Church, appointed as the great Shepherd to feed and rule it. To the future state of that Church, through its varied history, until Christ the true David should fully establish his dominion in the world, the preceding parables, spoken by our Lord, also manifestly refer; and as Asaph spoke of the same subjects under these types, so Christ under the veil of parables. Asaph was in this respect himself a type of Christ: each uttered his *parables* and enigmatical *sayings*, and revealed things *kept secret from ancient times.* In this respect also Christ answered to the typical Asaph; and as the latter was appointed by the Spirit of inspiration to be Messiah's type AS A TEACHER, so his shadowy ministry was directly FULFILLED in Christ when he uttered his parables on the same subjects; but with more obvious reference to his own Church and future glorious

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

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reign. Here then is another instance, to explain which the theory of accommodation has been called in, but which, when examined, directly refutes it. What Asaph calls "a parable," and "dark sayings," could have no application to the psalm, which, literally taken, is no more than a plain historical narrative, unless he considered himself as speaking of Messiah and his kingdom under the typical veil of the Jewish nation, and its most illustrious sovereign, and as speaking also in Messiah's person. This consideration alone sufficiently determines the prophetic character of the psalm referred to by the evangelist, and that there was a real fulfilment of a preindication of the character of our Lord's teaching in that of Asaph. The quotation of St. Matthew a little varies both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, but perfectly agrees in sense.

Verse 44. *He hideth, &c.*—Replaces it in its former state of concealment; and *for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field*, by which, according to Jewish notions, he would acquire a right to the treasure: at least in the Mishna it is laid down, "that whoever buys any thing of his neighbour, if money be found in the article bought it belongs to the purchaser." On the exact morality of the case, the parable determines nothing; its object being simply to show that when men are brought to set a proper value upon the great treasure of salvation, they will make all the sacrifices which Christ requires of them, though it be to "leave all, and follow him," in order to attain it.

Verses 45, 46. *Goodly pearls.*—This parable appears not to differ in import from the preceding: only the variation in the metaphor serves to impress us the more deeply with the unrivalled value of the blessings of the Gospel, and the necessity of taking every means to secure a personal interest in them. In the one they are compared to a treasure, generally; in the other to a *pearl of great price*, of the highest value, πολυτιμος μαργαριτης. Pearls were favourite stones in the east, and estimated at a high value; and the adjacent coasts of the Red Sea made this article of traffic familiar to the Jews. Their value, like that of other precious stones, rose with their size, perfectness, and beauty. This was the GOODLIEST among *goodly pearls*, and of such value as well to repay the man who should sell his whole estate to purchase it. The moral is obvious. Possessed of what this pearl represents, every man is beyond calculation wealthy; and without it the most opulent are poor indeed!

Verse 47. *A net cast into the sea, &c.*—The import of this parable is similar to that of the wheat and tares, though somewhat more general in its application. Its allusion to the occupation of those of the apostles who were fishermen would render it the more striking to them, though it is obvious to all. The large nets of the fishermen enclose both bad and good kinds of fish when used in waters where fish of these opposite qualities abound; and the separation of the noxious from the edible species followed immediately upon bringing the produce of the nets to shore, which represents, says our Lord, what will take place at the *end of the world*.—Then *the angels shall come forth; angels*, as in the parable of the tares, not *men;* and for the same reason,—and *sever the wicked from the just*. See note on verse 30.—Thus, though by the ministration of Christ's servants a visible mixed Church only is formed, this will not remain its permanent character. In eternity the separation will be complete and final. On all these parables it may be remarked that the leading parts only are intended to be significant, the rest belonging to the ornament or filling up of the narrative; and he who endeavours to bring forced and far fetched meanings out of parables will generally mistake a perverted ingenuity for the intention and mind of God. This ought to operate as a sufficient caution; and an illustration or two of this absurd manner of treating parables will show that caution is not unnecessary. One eminent commentator has thus interpreted the parable of the leaven: "By the woman who leavened the meal is meant the wisdom of God; by the leaven, the doctrine of the Gospel; by the three measures of meal, the three faculties of the soul, reason, anger, and concupiscence, which three faculties are made conformable to the doctrine of the Gospel by the wisdom of God!" And a modern expositor is not greatly inferior to the

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 [m] And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their

[m] Mark vi, 1; Luke iv, 16.

foregoing; who, in his remarks on the parable of the casting of the net into the sea, compares the Gospel to a net, "for its meanness in the esteem of men, and being of no account in the eyes of the world; and yet, like a net, it is a piece of curious workmanship, in which the manifold wisdom of God is displayed," &c. Both these examples are taken from the works of grave and learned men!

Verse 50. *And shall cast them into a furnace of fire.*—This is an allusion to the eastern punishment of burning alive; while *the wailing and gnashing of teeth*, not merely before they are cast in, but while *there*, εκει, seems to indicate the continuance of their existence in a state of misery.

Verse 52. *Every scribe which is instructed, &c.*—The scribes, as before stated, were distinguished by their skill in the Jewish laws and religion, and were thus qualified for their profession as public teachers. Our Lord, by giving the appellation SCRIBES to those to whom he had exclusively addressed several of the foregoing parables, and favoured them in private with the interpretation of others, intimated that he was training them up, and specially qualifying them, to fulfil the office of public teachers of his religion to the world; and thus urged upon them the duty of paying the most careful attention to his doctrine. *Instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, signifies made thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines, evidences, and practical ends of the Gospel; which can only be attained by diligent attention, personal experience of its truth and power, and earnest prayer for Divine illumination. Such a qualified teacher is compared to *a householder*, or master of a family, who has laid up in his *treasury* or storehouse those fruits of the earth, and other provision necessary for their daily use, which, according to Jewish manners, it was requisite for him daily to dispense to the whole family.

Things new and old.—A phrase which denotes great abundance, and is used in reference to the laying up of the produce of the new year with that of the old, that the supply might never fail. Thus it is promised, Lev. xxvi, 9, 10: "For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new;" that is, to make room for it. So Maimonides: "Behold, in it are all sorts of fruits, new and old." That under this allusion ministers are taught to administer the doctrines both of the LAW and the GOSPEL, the OLD covenant and the NEW, as some commentators will have it, is probably a mere conceit, considered as an exposition of our Lord's meaning, though an important part of every minister's duty. But our Lord manifestly intended to inculcate that those who teach others should possess a FULNESS of knowledge themselves on the great subjects of their ministry; that they, also, like the householder, should be always gathering in NEW FRUITS TO THE OLD; that the storehouse of their minds should never be scanty; and that the same discrimination is necessary to a minister as to a householder, in providing and bringing forth the food which is suitable to the ages and circumstances of the family. The NEW things do not, however, mean NOVELTIES in kind; but, as the fruits laid up in the storehouse of the householder were fruits of *the same kind*, reaped from the same fields, or gathered from the same trees, so the new things which "a scribe well instructed" is to collect and distribute, are new impressions and views of the same truths, and a stronger perception of their application to the varied cases of men. These are given to him as the result of recent meditation and earnest prayer, and possess a freshness and a power which render their ministration influential upon himself and others. The truths which form the true food of the soul are few in their general principles, but infinitely deep and rich; and all successful and well directed ministerial study brings them forth into clearer light, beauty, and acceptableness, and thus combines the old with the new, or the acknowledged principles of the word of God with their developement into all the particulars of faith, consolation, counsel, and duty.

Verse 54. *Into his own country.*—To Nazareth, where he had been brought up; which is so called in opposition to Caper-

synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

55 [n] Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, [o] A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

[n] John vi, 42.

[o] Mark vi, 4; Luke iv, 24; John iv, 44.

naum, which was the place of his usual abode.

Verse 55. *Is not this the carpenter's son?*—The word here translated *carpenter*, τεκτων, signifies a worker in iron, stone, or wood, that is, an artificer; but when used alone, without an adjective, in Scripture, it uniformly signifies a carpenter. Early tradition assigns this trade to Joseph; and as it was the constant rule among the Jews of all ranks to teach their sons some trade, our Lord might learn that of his reputed father. This, however, is by no means certain; for, as both Joseph and Mary knew him to be the promised Messiah, from the revelations of the angel and his extraordinary birth, this might not be required from him, though he was "subject" to them during his infancy and youth. It may, however, be fairly collected from the manner in which this question was put, and from the other references made by the people of Nazareth to his family, that they were in a lowly condition. He taught in the synagogues of this city; the people acknowledged, even with *astonishment*, the depth of his *wisdom*, and the might of his *works*; and yet, because he was *the son of a carpenter*, and his *brethren and sisters* were inhabitants of the place, so that they well enough knew that he had never had the advantages of education under any of their celebrated doctors, and intimated, by their reference to the humble circumstances of the family, that they could not afford that expense, *they were offended in him*; that is, they fell over the stumbling block of his humble condition and connections, and refused to acknowledge him to be the Messiah. The rational conclusion would have been, that, since he had not received from men the wisdom which astonished them, he must have received it from above; but how strong are the prejudices by which "an evil heart of unbelief" seals up the judgment! With respect to the brethren and sisters of our Lord here spoken of, opinions are divided, whether they were the sons of Joseph by a former wife, or by Mary, or whether they were the children of a brother or sister of Joseph or of Mary. The question is, however, unimportant, and cannot be fully settled. They appear to have formed one family, and to have dwelt together. See the note on chap. xii, 46.

Verse 57. *A prophet is not without honour, &c.*—That is, he is usually more honoured by strangers than by his immediate connections, who are apt to be moved by envy at the distinction put upon him. Besides, the latter, if reproved by him in the faithful exercise of his ministry, are most apt to be offended, and are most ready to object to him any circumstances of meanness which may be connected with his family and rank in life.

Verse 58. *And he did not many mighty works.*—The *mighty works*, therefore, at which these Nazarites are said, in verse 54, to have been astonished, were works of which they had heard, and not those they had witnessed. St. Mark says, "He could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them." The reason assigned is, *because of their unbelief*; which is not to be understood as though their unbelief limited his power, or that he did no mighty works except among those who fully acknowledged him to be the Messiah, which is contrary to the fact; but that the general and entire unbelief of the inhabitants of Nazareth, their utter contempt of his claims, influenced both the sick themselves, who, with few exceptions, had no desire to make application to him, and also their friends, who had no inclination even to make trial of his power, and therefore did not bring them out to him that he might relieve them. The *few sick folk* who were actually brought to him he healed "by laying his hands upon them."

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Herod's opinion of Christ.* 3 *Wherefore John Baptist was beheaded.* 13 *Jesus departeth into a desert place:* 15 *where he feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes:* 22 *he walketh on the sea to his disciples:* 34 *and landing at Gennesaret, healeth the sick by the touch of the hem of his garment.*

1 At that time [a] Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works * do show forth themselves in him.

3 ¶ [b] For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said unto him, [c] It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, [d] because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was

[a] Mark vi, 14; Luke ix, 7.—* Or, *are wrought by him.*
[b] Luke iii, 19.

[c] Lev. xviii, 16; xx, 21.—[d] Matt. xxi, 26.

CHAPTER XIV. Verse 1. *Herod the tetrarch.*—This was Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, who succeeded to a part of his father's dominions, Galilee and Perea. See the note on chapter ii, 1. A tetrarch was properly the ruler over a quarter part of any region; but the title was often given to those who ruled over any portion of a country. Tetrarchs are by courtesy sometimes called kings. This vicious prince now heard of the fame of Jesus; a fame which had long been spread throughout Galilee; and accounts of his character and miracles must have been previously heard at court, but probably passed for idle or superstitious tales; now they could no longer escape attention.

Verse 2. *This is John the Baptist, &c.*—In several parts of the country where Jesus and John had not been personally known, various opinions were circulated respecting our Lord, as that he was John the Baptist raised from the dead; or Elias, whom the Jews expected in person before the Messiah should be manifested, or Jeremiah, or some other of the ancient prophets. The heart of Herod, some think, often smote him, on account of the base murder of this holy man, for whom he had felt at one time great veneration, and that now it was a guilty conscience which caused him to credit the report that Jesus was the resuscitated Baptist; *and he said to his servants, This is John the Baptist.* But it rather appears, from comparing the narratives of the evangelists, that Herod was only "perplexed," or anxiously doubted whether the Baptist had risen again in the person of our Lord. Bishop Pearce, therefore, renders the words interrogatively, "Is this John the Baptist? Has he been raised from the dead?" Whatever Herod's feelings might be, they did not make him afraid of meeting the holy martyr; for St. Luke adds, "he desired to see him;" at least he was anxious to have the mystery solved.

Verses 3–5. *For Herod had laid hold on John and bound him, &c.*—St. Matthew goes back a little in his history to introduce, upon this mention of Herod, the account of the death of John, and to account for Christ withdrawing himself. Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, another of the sons of Herod the Great, and was married to her uncle, Herod Philip; from whom Herod Antipas took her, during the lifetime of her husband, and married her, and was living in this foul and shameless adultery when reproved by John the Baptist. As Herod was a Jew, he professed subjection to the Jewish law, which forbade the marrying of a brother's wife, even after his death, except in the special case where he had left no issue; so that John, by pronouncing this marriage unlawful, declared the parties guilty of incest and adultery. It was this that incensed Herod, and planted a revenge in the breast of Herodias, which could not rest until it had glutted itself with the blood of the faithful and holy reprover. Herod indeed would have *put him to death* immediately, but refrained from policy, because he feared a tumult of *the people.* John was, however, cast into prison; and an opportunity was given for schemes of feminine vengeance, more dark and deadly than any other when once awakened, to work his ruin.

Verse 6. *But when Herod's birthday was kept.*—That this was done with great pomp, appears from St. Mark, who says that "he made a great feast for his lords, high captains, and the chief persons of Galilee." The dancing of the daughter of Herodias before, or rather εν τω μεσω, in the midst of the company, was a public and shameless glorying of Herod and his unlawful wife in their infamy; this daughter of Herodias being the offspring of Philip, whom she had deserted, and whose child as well as wife had been wrested from him by the stronger power of

kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought in a

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his brother. Dancing was common among the Jews on festival as well as common occasions; and here there appears no ground for considering it as in itself an act of lightness or indignity, the princess being but a child, though sufficiently old to be instructed by her mother what to ask of Herod in consequence of his oath. Her name was Salome; and her dancing appears to have *pleased Herod* by the peculiar elegance of her movement. His lavish admiration of the daughter was also an act of flattery to the mother, who possessed so much influence over him. Nor is there any reason for the conjecture that this dance was one of that pantomimic character, satirized as licentious by some of the poets, and which, in truth, was of eastern original. Such dances were performed by hired women, who studied and practised them as a profession.

Verse 7. *He promised with an oath.*—Rash promises sealed with oaths were often made by the kings and great men of antiquity in their revels. Herodotus mentions a promise of this vague kind made to a female, by Xerxes, which was followed by many mischievous consequences. "He bade her ask whatever she desired, and he confirmed it by his oath."

Verse 8. *And she, being before instructed.*—Not *before* she had danced, but before she made her request; for St. Mark states that she went out to her mother, and said, What shall I ask?

A charger.—Πινάξ is properly a pine board: hence a wooden platter or dish, and a vessel of this kind made of any other materials, but still preserving the original name. In Homer the word is used for a basket, and for a tablet.

Verse 9. *And the king was sorry, &c.*—Such are the contradictions in human nature, and especially in tyrants accustomed to indulge every passion to excess, and to surrender themselves to every impression unchecked by any thing but some contrary feeling in their own minds, swelling like waves dashing against each other. This prince "had feared John;" he had stood in awe of his sanctity, knowing that he was a just man, and a holy, and *observed* or protected him, συνετηρει, probably from the persecutions of some of the more powerful of the Pharisees and Sadducees; "and when he heard him, he did many things," according to his exhortations, "and heard him gladly." And yet in his unjust anger, excited because John refused either to sanction or to be silent respecting an incestuous marriage, he first cast him into prison, and then surrendered his life to the fury of the partner of his guilt. Of so little consequence is it for us to do "MANY things" at the command of God, unless we walk "in ALL his statutes and ordinances blameless;" for the example of Herod teaches this important lesson, that a partial surrender of ourselves to the influence of truth is no security at all against the most overwhelming outbreakings of those corruptions of the heart which remain unmortified.

Nevertheless for the oath's sake.—This was miserable casuistry; for an indefinite oath must necessarily be interpreted by circumstances; and had Herodias instructed her daughter to demand Herod's own head, no doubt this pretended respecter of oaths would have excused himself from the obligation; he was therefore probably more strongly influenced by the second consideration, *because of them which sat at meat with him*, in whose presence he would not seem to refuse to gratify his wife, for whom he had a blind passion, and whose suit they might enforce by way of making their court to her. It is not improbable that among the guests were some of those enemies of John from whose persecutions Herod had before protected him. Doubtless the greater number present were infidel Sadducees, and those Pharisees who were justly characterized by our Lord as "whited walls and painted sepulchres." Had they been any thing better, they would have interposed in behalf of John, and discovered their true skill in interpreting the law, of which they made their boast, by showing Herod that no oath could bind him to commit murder, much less a vague and general one. This is sufficiently indicative of the true character of the guests.

Verse 10. *And he sent, and beheaded John in prison.*—In this manner the Emperor Commodus despatched the Prefect Perennius. Νυκτωρ πεμψας αποτεμνει την κεφαλην, says Herodian, "sending by night he cut off his head." John was beheaded, according to Josephus, in the castle of Machærus, two days' journey from Tiberias, Herod's usual residence.

Verse 11. *She brought it to her mother.*—To such a mother one might well apply

charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13 ¶ [e] When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15 ¶ [f] And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they said unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

[e] Mark vi, 32; Luke ix, 10.

[f] John vi, 5; Mark vi, 35.

the words of Ezekiel: "What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps: and it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men." This wretched pair of murderers were some time afterward stripped of their kingdom, and banished to Lyons, where they died. The future vicious life of Salome accorded with her education. See notes on Mark vi, 20, 21.

Verse 13. *When Jesus heard of it, he departed, &c.*—He went into the wilderness, near Bethsaida, on the other side of the lake, where he was out of Herod's jurisdiction. Still he was followed by the people of the neighbouring cities, on foot, that is, by land, till a great multitude was collected, on whom our Lord had compassion, healed their sick, and wrought one of his most noted miracles to supply them with bread.

Verse 15. *And when it was evening.*—The first evening with the Jews began at three o'clock P. M., the second at six. The first is here meant; and the expression, *the time, ωρα, is now past*, may either signify that the usual hour of dining, which was about the sixth hour, or noon, was long past; or simply that *the day* is far spent. On the miracle which follows it may be remarked, 1. That the place was "a desert," so that no suspicion of supplies being laid up in it could be entertained; beside that, the meeting between Christ and the multitude was so far from having been preconcerted, that he had retired from observation by sea, and they, noticing the direction of the vessel, followed by land, increasing their numbers as they advanced, announcing that they were in search of Jesus. 2. That, beside adding another miraculous proof of his mission, the object of the miracle was to supply food to a multitude who attended upon the ministry of Christ with great affection, so that they might not be constrained by hunger to depart from him to obtain it, and lose a portion of that opportunity of attending on his doctrine which they had travelled so far to enjoy; *they need not depart; give ye them to eat.* 3. The miracle would remind every reflecting person among them of their fathers being fed with manna in the wilderness: here, however, the supply was not rained down from heaven upon them; but *the five loaves and two fishes* were multiplied in the very act of distribution; a striking comment upon the words, "Man shall not live by bread alone," by one element, or one means of sustenance, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," who makes the power of his word known by that variety of means which he has at command to accomplish the same end. 4. As the loaves and fishes which were distributed by the disciples, formed the common stock of provisions for our Lord and them, we see the usual fare of our Lord while with the fishermen of Galilee,—the fish they caught in the lake, and coarse bread, for they were loaves of barley. 5. The order of the proceeding added at once to its solemnity and the evidence of the miracle. The multitude were made *to sit down on the grass*, by companies; and the scanty store being brought out before them, and distributed by the disciples to EACH ONE, not only were the disciples themselves witnesses of the miraculous increase of the food, but every individual who received it at their hands. No miracle could be wrought with greater publicity, or under circumstances which more effectually excluded all deception. For the loaves and the fishes being *taken* by our Saviour himself, as the master of the feast, while all eyes were fixed upon him, *he looked up to heaven*, the seat of his Father's glory, *blessed*, that is, he blessed or gave thanks to God, as the giver of food to his creatures; *and brake* the bread, and gave it to his disciples, and they to the multitude; so that it would appear that it increased in his hands, and was taken from him by the disciples and distributed, fresh supplies being dealt out to them by Christ until the whole multitude was fed. 6. All were fully satisfied; for on this the words of the evangelist are most express,—*and they did all eat, and were filled:* and the fragments, filling twelve

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.
19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.
20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.
21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.
22 ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.
23 [g] And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: [h] and when the evening was come, he was there alone.
24 But the ship was now in the midst

[g] Mark vi, 46.

[h] John vi, 16.

baskets, gave additional evidence of the vastness of the miracle, since more remained after all were fed than the original quantity from which it had proceeded.

Verse 19. *He blessed.*—Not that he blessed the bread, but, as observed in the preceding note, he blessed God. This expression is taken from the devotional form constantly used by the Jews before meals, in which they acknowledge God as the giver of their blessings. Our Lord here sanctions this pious and becoming custom, and perhaps also employed the same words. In more modern times their benediction is, "Blessed be thou, our God, the king of the world, who bringest bread out of the earth;" and before the wine, "Blessed be thou, our God, the King of the world, who createst the fruit of the vine;" but whether this was their ancient form, is not certain. It was then, however, as now, a form of "blessing," that is, of giving thanks to God; for what St. Matthew here calls *blessing*, in chapter xv, 36, he terms *giving thanks*, so that ευλογειν and ευχαριστειν are, in this application of them, words of the same import.

And brake.—The loaves of the Jews, being in the form of flat cakes, were not divided by the knife, but by breaking. Hence the common phrase, "the breaking of bread."

Verse 20. *They did all eat, and were filled.*—They had a full meal and to spare. The Chaldee paraphrast on 2 Chron. xxxi, 10, uses similar terms, "We have eaten and are filled, and have left much; for the word of the Lord hath blessed his people." Abundance is, however, no plea for waste; for the fragments were carefully gathered up: a minor but useful lesson taught by the history.

Baskets.—Much research has been expended by different commentators to account for these baskets being at hand in the desert. Juvenal has been referred to, who, in his third satire, speaks of the Jews at Rome as carrying a basket, *cophinus*, and hay; and Martial, by whom, Epig. v, 17, a Jew is called *cistifer*, one who carries a basket; and different conjectures have been adopted for explaining these allusions. The baskets may, however, be well enough accounted for without going beyond the circumstances of the story. The multitude went out of the cities in search of our Lord, who had withdrawn into a desert place; it does not appear that they had any other guide to his retreat save the direction of the vessel in which some of them had seen him depart; and it is evident from the position of the desert of Bethsaida, that many had taken a considerable journey; so that the *baskets* were, no doubt, those which were commonly used on journeys for carrying their provisions. These provisions, however, before the miracle was wrought, had been wholly exhausted, as well they might be, in three days. It is to be remembered also, that many of these people were travelling to Jerusalem to the passover, so that their baskets for provisions were a necessary part of their equipment. See notes on Luke ix, 11, and Mark vi, 35.

Verse 22. *Jesus constrained his disciples.*—That is, he exhorted or directed them; for the word does not necessarily imply more; and, as they were directed to sail for Bethsaida, as we learn from St. Mark, which was but a short distance probably across a bay, and to which place our Lord could go on foot, there appears no reason for reluctance on their part. The word is equivalent to εκελευσεν απελθειν, chap. viii, 18. Our Lord wished to be left behind to dismiss the multitudes, who, as we learn from St. John, were so transported by the stupendous miracle they had just witnessed, that they would by force have proclaimed him the king of the Jews; and, owing to this, he withdrew, and went up into a *mountain apart to pray.*

Verse 23. *And when the evening was come.*—The evening is mentioned as having arrived, verse 15. That was the first evening, and commenced at three o'clock P. M.; but this was the second evening, which began at six o'clock, and extended to the dawn of the next morning. See note on verse 15.

Verse 24. *But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, &c.*—Instead, therefore, of having been able to reach Bethsaida, the wind being *contrary*, they were now driven into the middle of the sea, many miles out

of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; It is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind * boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

* Or, *strong*.

of their course, and continued buffeted by the tempest until Jesus came to them, which was not till the next morning.

Verse 25. *In the fourth watch of the night.*—The Jewish division of the night was into three watches; but now the Roman distribution into four watches appears to have been adopted; from six to nine, from nine to twelve, from twelve to three, and from three to six. It was therefore between the hours of three and six in the morning, which was *the fourth watch*, when our Lord was seen by the disciples *walking on the sea*. This also shows that he had continued several hours of the night in prayer, "on the mountain apart."

Verse 26. *They were troubled, &c.*—They were greatly affrighted on seeing a human form walking on the sea; for still the light was too obscure to show them that it was Christ himself; and *they cried out for fear*. That the appearance was *a spirit*, *φαντασμα*, *a ghost*, they could only conclude; for they had left Christ on the land: and what should be able to walk upon the sea but a disembodied spirit, no longer subject to the laws of matter? Their fright was natural; for surely there is no need, with some, to suppose the imaginations of the disciples haunted with such horrible notions of ghosts as may be found in the works of modern rabbins, to account for it. A ship's company of persons the most skeptical on the subject of apparitions would doubtless in similar circumstances have betrayed similar emotions, and "cried out for fear" as loudly. We have here also a proof that the belief in the existence of men after death, and a spiritual world, was the belief of the body of the Jews. The skepticism of the Sadducees on these subjects appears to have been chiefly confined to the rich and learned.

Verse 28. *Bid me come to thee on the water.*—From this it appears that our Lord continued walking or standing upon the water for some time after he approached near enough to converse with the disciples; but still at some distance. What might be the motive of Peter for this request, does not clearly appear. His ardent spirit, excited by this new proof of the high and Divine character of his Lord, probably at once concluded that his faith in his power and majesty was now sufficiently strong, that he could venture his life upon his bidding, undismayed by winds and waves. He was permitted to make the trial, in order to teach him more humble views of himself, by revealing the weakness of that faith which he thought so strong; for when he saw the wind boisterous, and consequently the waves greatly agitated, he LOOKED OFF from that omnipotence of his Saviour on which his faith at first simply and exclusively fixed, and, his fear rising with his unbelief, he began to sink, and cry out for help. That help was seasonably given; but with suitable though tender reproof: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* The doubt of Peter did not imply that he was not fully persuaded that the appearance was that of Christ himself; that he knew before he left the vessel; for the expression, *If it be thou*, is equivalent to, *Since it is thou thyself*, and expresses full conviction. And his appeal to Christ for help, when sinking, also shows that he had no doubt as to the person he was addressing. But he *doubted* in the sense of hesitating whether to regard the violence of the waves or the power of Christ: like a man standing where two ways meet, undetermined which to enter; or a balance vibrating with opposite impulses, as the word *διεζειν* intimates. He thus lost that full, simple view of the omnipotence of Christ, under the influence of which he had cast himself upon the water. This teaches us, in all matters where we have a WARRANT from Christ to trust in him; a BIDDING of Christ to come to him, though through storms and tempest, to look alone at his word of eternal faithfulness, and "to walk by faith, not by sight." This is the trust he delights to honour; though, as in the case of Peter, he has compassion even upon *little faith*.

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 ¶ [i] And when they were gone over they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

[i] St. Mark, chap. vi, 53.

Verse 32. *The wind ceased.*—Suddenly and preternaturally ceased, or was lulled; so that the two most uncontrollable elements of nature, the winds and the waves, again obey their Lord. He had walked upon the one by suspending the power of gravitation, realizing Job's description of the Omnipotent: "He walketh upon the waves of the sea;" or, as the Septuagint renders it, "walking upon the sea, as upon a pavement;" and being once in the vessel, by the same power the contrary wind, which had carried the disciples out into the midst of the sea, far from their destination, was immediately hushed by his almighty word, that they might speedily gain "the coast of Gennesaret." These again were breakings forth of the hidden majesty of his Divinity, which, if not fully revealed, was yet powerfully impressed upon the disciples, for *they that were in the ship* were not common mariners: the vessel was probably worked by the disciples themselves, they being for the most part fishermen. *Came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.* The Messiah; but the Messiah under his highest designation and character in the Old Testament,—"THE SON OF GOD." From the absence of the articles before *υιος* and *Θεου*, some have rendered this, "a son of God," or, "a son of a god;" assuming that the want of the articles implies a sense inferior to that which the same terms must bear when the articles are used with them. But this is wholly refuted by Matt. xxvii, 43; where the chief priests, mocking Christ upon the cross, say, "If he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am THE SON OF GOD." Here also the articles are wanting; but our Lord is taunted with having called himself the Son of God in the highest sense in which that term was used without the articles; even in that sense which, according to their notions, implied blasphemy. So also in Luke i, 35, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD," the same omission is found; although, whatever the import of the phrase may be, it must obviously be used in a sense equal to that in which it occurs with the articles. A third example is in Rom. i, 4, "declared to be THE SON OF GOD with power;" where, unquestionably, the highest possible conception of Christ as the Son of God must have been in the mind of the apostle. So utterly inconclusive are such criticisms grounded upon the Greek article. See also the note on chap. xxvii, 54.

Verse 34. *The land of Gennesaret.*—Which bordered the lake or sea on the west.

Verse 35. *Had knowledge of him.*—*Επιγνωντες αυτον*, when they knew him again, or remembered him, because he had before visited the same parts.

Verse 36. *That they might only touch the hem of his garment.*—See note on chap. ix, 20, 21. The virtue was not in the garment; but the touching it was an act of faith, and it was rewarded. It was in Capernaum, which was situated in this district, that the woman with the issue of blood was healed by touching the hem of Christ's garment; and probably this led these poor diseased people to follow her example, so that her faith was the means of exciting the believing effort of many others. See note on Mark vi, 53.

CHAPTER XV.

3 Christ reproveth the scribes and Pharisees for transgressing God's commandments through their own traditions: 11 teacheth how that which goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man. 21 He healeth the daughter of the woman of Canaan, 30 and other great multitudes: 32 and with seven loaves and a few little fishes feedeth four thousand men, beside women and children.

1 THEN [a] came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

[a] St. Mark, chap. vii, 1.

CHAPTER XV. Verse 1. *Scribes and Pharisees which were at Jerusalem.*—This sect was found in every considerable place; but the most eminent were those of Jerusalem. They professed to be the most deeply skilled in the law and traditions, and everywhere had great authority. Whether these were sent by the chiefs of the party to watch the conduct of our Lord, or came of their own accord, does not appear. They seem, however, to have considered themselves as guardians of the traditions of the elders, and as authorized to rebuke those who transgressed them.

Verse 2. *Tradition of the elders.*—The *elders* do not appear to have been any *body* or council of men, like the sanhedrim, but learned men who had made themselves notable as doctors or expounders of laws and customs, and who, according to the reputation and influence they had acquired, were followed in their opinions by others. As the pagan philosophers had their sects, so the most illustrious of these Jewish doctors had their schools or followers; and as we speak of Pythagoreans and Platonists, so the Jews speak of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, and other ancient doctors, among whom there was a general agreement, though in minor points, which, however, their disciples magnified into importance, they differed in opinion. *Tradition*, παραδοσις, קבלה, "cabbala," in its general sense, is any thing taught, or delivered down from one to another; and that which bore that appellation in our Lord's time was entirely oral, and was supposed to contain the opinions and decisions of the wise in different ages, as to the import and interpretation of what might be obscure in the law and customs of Moses. It originated, doubtless, in a better age, and was then probably confined to a few practical particulars; but as false opinions, superstitions, and other corruptions prevailed, it swelled to vast extent, and not only descended to the invention and regulation of a vast number of particulars of ceremonial observance, but, what was still worse, brought in a subtle casuistry to explain away the meaning of many moral precepts and to palliate and give sanction to bad principles and a vicious practice. As these traditions also embodied many things, not only explanatory of the law, but supplementary to it, the Pharisees at length raised them above their original character, when they existed in a simple form, as the mere *opinions* of wise men, and pretended that they were delivered by God verbally to Moses, so that he received, not only a written, but also an oral law, which was from him transmitted to their elders in successive ages. These traditions, or at least many of them, were collected in the Mishna, by Rabbi Judah, A. D. 180. The extravagant and even impious authority given by the scribes and Pharisees to their traditions, appears from numerous extracts given by Lightfoot, Schoetgenius, Gill, and others, from their later rabbins. Two instances from the Babylonian Talmud will be sufficient for illustration: "Know then that the words of the scribes are more lovely than the words of the law; weightier are the words of the elders than the words of the prophets." "My son, attend to the words of the scribes more than to the words of the law; every one that transgresses the words of the scribes is guilty of death." How truly, therefore, did our Lord charge them with making "the word of God void through their tradition!". The Sadducees, however, rejected their traditions as expositions of the written law. The mystical cabala was distinct from these traditions, and was a mode of interpreting Scripture by giving a meaning to parts of words, and even to the letters of which they are composed, either by considering the arithmetical value of a letter, or taking each letter of a word for an entire diction; or making up a word from the initial letters of many; or changing or transposing the letters of a word; and thus discovering, as the adepts dreamed, many important mysteries. This solemn trifling has been preferred by many of the most learned of the Jews, since the Christian era, to every other mode of exposition. How far it prevailed in our Lord's time, does not appear; but there was then a dogmatic cabalism drawn out of the eastern and Greek pagan philosophy, which before that period considerably influenced the opinions of many of the more learned Jews. Not many traces

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For God commanded, saying, [b] Honour thy father and mother: and, [c] He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to

[b] Exod. xx, 12; Deut. v, 16.

[c] Exod. xxi, 17; Lev. xx, 9; Prov. xx, 20.

of this, however, appear in the conversations of Christ as recorded in the gospels.

They wash not their hands when they eat bread.—The washing of hands before taking any food was so important a matter with the Pharisees, that they appear to have been greatly offended that the example of Christ and his disciples should diminish in the minds of the people their reverence for this ceremony. How serious a matter they made of it, appears from their writers.—Rabbi Jose says, "Whoever eats bread without washing of hands is as if he committed whoredom." "He that blesseth food with unwashed hands is guilty of death."—This custom, it is to be observed, was not one of cleanliness, but a matter of mere superstition; for, whether the hands needed cleansing or not, it was equally binding.

Verse 3. *Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God? &c.*—The answer of our Lord is, in sum, If my disciples disregard the tradition of the elders, this is but a transgression against a commandment of MEN; but ye *transgress even* (for the *και* is to be taken intensively) *the commandment of God by your tradition.* Thus he strikes at the foundation of the whole system of tradition, by stripping it at once of that authority which they had fabulously assigned to it; teaching that it was not only of *men*, but not always of *wise* or good men, since in several instances it stood in sinful opposition to the Divine law, and was therefore in no case worthy of respect.

Verse 4. *Honour thy father and mother.*—In this duty our Lord includes affording support to parents, which indeed is implied in the Hebrew word כבד. This command of God could not be denied by the Pharisees: it had been written by the finger of God; it was "the first command with promise;" and by themselves it was understood not merely of respect and reverence to parents, and cheerful obedience to all their lawful commands, but also of the duty of honouring them with substance, of feeding, clothing, and supplying their wants with liberality and tender affection. Thus their own writers call this "the weightiest commandment among weighty ones;" and by the Jewish canons a son is bound "to afford his father meat, drink, and clothing, to lead him in and out, and to wash his hands and feet." Their law was also severe against *cursing father or mother*, that is, reviling them, or using reproachful and disrespectful language, *καταλογια*, to them, against which heinous crime the penalty of death was denounced, Exodus xxi, 17; so that the import and strictness of the Divine law on this point could not be mistaken.—Nor does it appear that the Jews in general were chargeable with any general infraction of this duty, except in the case where the wretched, selfish, and infecting sophistry of the Pharisaic tradition interposed, and which, therefore, our Lord selects, in order to maintain his charge against them.

Verses 5, 6. *It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.*—St. Mark expresses it, "It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother." The word corban signifies *a sacred gift* or offering, from קרב, to offer; and from hence the treasury of the temple was called *κορβανον*, as the depository of the consecrated or devoted offerings. Such gifts were unalienable, and could not be diverted to any other use.—The word corban was therefore used in vowing or dedicating any thing to a sacred or supposed sacred use, and had the import of a solemn oath; for to say, *Corban*, or, Let it be corban, or, as corban, effectually prohibited any thing from private use or advantage. The Pharisees therefore held, that when application was made by a parent to a son for relief, and he should say, "Corban whatever thou mightest be profited by me," he was released from his obligation to the fifth commandment, and might without blame leave his parents to poverty and wretchedness; and this was probably done from that rapacity which our Lord so frequently rebukes in them, by which they encouraged the alienation of property to the temple, or probably often to their own use, under pretence of receiving honour on account of their sanctity from those superstitious persons upon whose credulity they practised. To these vows the parties who made them were held to be bound in the strictest manner: and as they alienated to pretended pious uses that portion of their property by which their parents might have been sustained, "the tradition of the elders" most clearly *rendered the commandment of God of none effect.*

Our translators, both here and in Mark, have supposed an ellipsis, which they supply with, "he shall be free." Koinoel considers the *και* before the *ου μη τιμηση* redundant like the Hebrew ו, and reads, "Whosoever shall say, It is a gift—he need not

his father or *his* mother, [d] *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 [e] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

10 ¶ [f] And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which

[d] Mark vii, 11, 12.—[e] Isaiah xxix, 13.

[f] Mark vii, 14.

honour his father and mother." Bowyer takes *και* in the sense of *therefore*, and translates, "Therefore he must not relieve his father or mother." An ellipsis must, however, probably be understood; and our translation properly fills it up with the natural inference from the premises. *He shall be free*, he shall not be liable to the penalty. Verse 4.

Verse 7. *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy, &c.*—Since, under pretence of piety, these wretched men devoured the substance of the poor, and caused their infatuated followers to violate the most solemn laws of God, they were in truth accurately described as *hypocrites*, acting their part in religion for gain, and personating a character to which they had no claim. The quotation from Isaiah cannot be considered as a mere adaptation of words addressed by the prophet to the Jews of his day; for our Lord expressly says, *Well* or justly *did Esaias* PROPHESY OF YOU; and upon examining the section of prophecy from which the words are taken, it will appear evident that it has respect also to the times of Messiah, and ranks therefore in that class of predictions which have a primary and an ulterior application. The quotation very nearly agrees with the Septuagint, but differs in one clause from the present Hebrew text, which, however, may be interpreted to the same meaning. Of all will worship, all self-devised schemes of piety, not authorized by the word of God, or comprising any thing contrary to its principles, our Lord declares, *In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* The word rendered "worship" includes not only all acts of a directly devotional kind, but every thing by which reverence is manifested and respect is had to God. It comprehends, therefore, all the services of piety. The *ενταλματα*, rendered "doctrines," are not to be understood in the sense of *opinions*; but of injunctions or regulations. Campbell translates "institutions merely human," which accurately expresses the meaning; for, as he observes, "the word *ενταλμα* is always in the New Testament joined with *ανθρωπων*; and wherever it occurs is contrasted by implication with the precepts of God, which in the New Testament are never denominated *ενταλματα*, but *εντολαι*." All such worship is *vain* and fruitless: and not only *unprofitable*, but in its general tendency *hurtful*. As to every thing required of us, the word of God contains either particular directions, or general principles easily applicable to any given case; and, only as we have its authority, can we look with confidence to the Divine acceptance. This shows the necessity of as simple a conformity to the word of God as possible in every thing connected with religious services, and ought to have guarded the Church against all those attempts at *improving* upon the primitive examples contained in the New Testament, in order, as it has been pretended, to render the acts of worship more impressive and influential. But in the Christian Church, as in the Jewish, the gates were thrown open to a flood of ceremonial and superstitious observances, which produced in both hypocrisy, pride, bigotry, and often direct and flagrant wickedness. With the loss of simplicity came the loss of *power;* and in both, though the people "drew near to God with their mouth, and honoured him with their lips," and that in a formal, exact, and pompous manner, the result was, that "their heart was removed far from him."—In all such cases religion degenerates into form, or mere sentimentalism, or superstition, or a mixture of all; and the minds of men, instead of being directly led to God, to seek communion with him, are detained amid complex and varied services, which produce a self-righteous dependence, or are taken as a discharge from the obligations of holiness.

Verse 11. *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth, &c.*—Our Lord addressed these words to the multitude in the presence of the Pharisees, who were malignantly observing him, and thus openly took them out of the hands of these false teachers, and instilled into their minds truth as solid and important as their traditions were vain and trifling in every thing but their corrupting effect. Either he referred in what follows to the notion, that food eaten with unwashed hands defiled those who partook of it, and

cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, [g] Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: [h] they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

[g] John xv, 2.

[h] Luke vi, 39.

so this address to the multitude arose out of his conversation with the Pharisees; or he intended still farther to expose the absurdity of their notions by showing the folly of the reason on which they made a distinction as to clean and unclean meats beyond the rule of the Jewish law. He might also thus tacitly intend to prepare his disciples, by the general principles he laid down on this occasion, for that general abolition of the Mosaic distinctions as to clean and unclean meats which was to follow the full institution of his religion. The Jewish notion was, that a moral defilement arose from the use of certain prohibited food; so that forbidden meats "are unclean in themselves, and defile both body and soul." In this also moral and ceremonial distinctions were confounded; and when the partaking of certain food was regarded as a moral defilement, the abstinence from it was held, by a fair deduction, to be an important branch of righteousness. and thus the attention was turned from the state of the heart to external observances.—To counteract this, our Lord declares to the multitude, in direct opposition to the Pharisaic doctrine, that *not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man*, renders him *common*, and unclean as the word signifies in opposition to *holy;* that no kind of meats and drinks assigned by God for the use of man, taken temperately, renders him offensive and odious to God, as though he had contracted guilt and pollution by committing sin; *but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man.* The expression is enigmatical, *the mouth*, in the second clause, signifying the HEART OF MAN; but the Pharisees sufficiently understood it to be *offended* with this *saying*, the meaning of which he opens more fully to his disciples in a following verse.

Verses 13, 14. *Every plant which my heavenly Father, &c.*—Φυτεια signifies the act of planting, but by transition a *plant;* and by a common metaphor the opinions and affections of the human mind are compared to plants and fruits, springing up from the seeds which have been sown there by instruction. Here the plants are to be understood of the doctrines and precepts of the Pharisees; which, being opposed to the truths and laws of the Scriptures, are said not to have been planted by the Father, and therefore, whatever offence might be taken by Pharisees, and whatever might be the consequence of their rage, they were to be rooted up with unsparing hand. Truth can make no compromise with error, and it shall ultimately prevail. Innumerable are the seeds of error which have been sown in the Church, and great and deleterious their product; but let none despair: the words of Christ are PROPHETIC as well as admonitory: every plant which springs not from heavenly seed, planted by the Divine hand itself, *shall be rooted up.* By this general declaration the disciples were also taught their duty. Not, indeed, when they became public teachers, to root up supposed error, as in later times, by civil coercion and violence; but as they had an example in their Lord, by calm but most faithful and unsparing refutation. In this way no allowance was to be made for errors opposed to the clearly revealed decisions of the *Father;* but at all hazards they were to proclaim the truth, and to expose the unsoundness and the evil consequences of the errors it was designed to displace and destroy. The force and instructiveness of this passage is lost by those who suppose our Lord refers to the destruction of the Pharisees themselves, by the judgments which were to come upon the Jewish nation.

Verse 14. *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the bind, &c.*—Leave them; have done with them, because of their false and dangerous doctrines; renounce them as your teachers, for when one blind man leads another, *both shall fall into the ditch.* Our translation, *Let them alone*, is too weak; for Christ exhorts his disciples, and all who might be present, not merely not to trouble themselves about them, as to whether they were offended or not, as some understand the words, but the proverbial and figurative mode of speech which follows shows that he enjoins an entire renunciation and disallowance of them as religious guides. These professedly learned instructers were themselves ignorant of the true way of salvation; and for any to place their souls under their charge would be an act of infatuation as fatal as that of blind persons putting themselves under the guidance of the blind to be led along a dangerous road.

Both shall fall into the ditch.—To fall into a ditch conveys the idea of sustaining only a trifling inconvenience or injury, whereas our Lord intended to intimate danger of the

15 [i] Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth in at the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 [k] For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20 These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

21 ¶ [l] Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

[i] Mark vii, 17.—[k] Gen. vi, 5; viii, 21.

[l] Mark vii, 24.

highest kind. *Both shall fall into the* PIT, better conveys the idea; and *βοθυνον* is to be understood as the image of eternal perdition: so strongly does our Lord guard us here, as well as in his sermon on the mount, against erring and wicked teachers. By whatever plausible arguments men may be deluded into the belief that they may innocently sanction them by attending on their ministrations, our Lord's words fully decide the question.

Verse 15. *Declare unto us this parable.*—This is an instance in which the word *parable* is used to signify any figurative or enigmatical speech. The disciples had only a general conception of our Lord's meaning, and desired a farther explanation; but our Lord's words, "Are ye also YET without understanding," convey a mild reproof, that, after so long an attendance upon his instructions, they had not at once thoroughly comprehended his meaning; also intimating, perhaps, that they were not themselves sufficiently freed from that superstitious importance which the Jews in general attached to distinctions of meats.

Verse 19. *For out of the heart.*—Never was a stronger and more humbling picture drawn of the corruption of human nature. Of whatever evil we can conceive, of whatever evils manifest themselves, and spread desolation and misery through society, the human heart is the fountain. The seat is there; they all spring from that source; and on this is grounded the necessity of that renewal of the heart, that entire regeneration of the will, affections, and all other moral faculties of the soul, upon which our Lord insisted in opposition to the Pharisees, who placed holiness in external acts, and left the vices of the heart unremedied. And it is here to be remarked that "the heart" of which our Lord speaks is not the heart of any individual exclusively, nor of the Pharisees, nor of the Jews, but the HEART OF MAN; and so this is a most unequivocal declaration and proof of the fall of man's nature from that original state of "righteousness and true holiness" in which it was first created. It is similar, indeed, both in its generality and import, to the testimony of Jeremiah on the same subject: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" and to that of Solomon: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." This indeed could not be a new doctrine; the whole scheme of our redemption is built upon it: for if the first Adam had not been a fountain of sin and of death to his posterity, we had needed no second Adam to be a fountain of salvation and holiness.

Evil thoughts.—This is feebly rendered by Doddridge, *evil reasonings*; and not happily by Campbell, *malicious contrivances.* Evil thoughts appear to comprehend both those wicked *imaginings* upon which corrupt minds love to dwell, and also evil *desires* and *purposes*, and secret mental oppositions of *temper* to persons and to truth, which, our Lord had already taught, subjected men to condemnation as effectually as the overt acts to which they usually lead. "Evil *thoughts*" is a more extensive term, and includes all that can be meant by either "evil reasonings," or "malicious contrivances." The terms used are general, and do not affect strict precision.

Blasphemies.—Calumnies and detractions, which, when impiously directed against God and sacred things, are strictly denominated *blasphemy*, and when against others, *evil speaking*. See note on Mark vii, 9.

Verse 22. *A woman of Canaan.*—St. Mark calls her "a Greek," that is, a Gentile, "a Syro-Phenician by nation." Syro or Syrian Phenicia was so called from its being formerly included in the kingdom of Syria. It was that part of the coast of Canaan on the Mediterranean in which the cities of Tyre and Sidon were situated; and is in the Acts and the gospels termed "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," as in the preceding verse. This woman is called *a woman of Canaan*, because that country was still inhabited, at least in part, by the descendants of Canaan, of whom Sidon was the eldest son. Canaanite as she was, she had heard of Christ, or seen his works, and

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, [m] I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And

[m] St. Matthew, chap. x, 6.

acknowledged him to be the Messiah, the Son of David, by which title she addresses him, and thus declares her faith.

Verse 23. *He answered her not a word.*—He knew the strength of her faith, and the extent of the trial to which it might safely be put; and he appeared to disregard her, as though in denial of her request, that her faith might in the result be more illustriously displayed.

Send her away, for she crieth after us.—Dismiss her, by granting her request, for she is overwhelmed with distress, as is manifest by her *cries*. Those who think that the reason why the disciples thus urged our Lord, was, that they might rid themselves of a clamorous petitioner, do them little credit, and there is not the least reason for so uncandid an interpretation. That they wished her request to be granted, is clear, from our Lord's reply; and that her cries had excited a deep commiseration in her case may be well presumed: and it is pleasing to notice this instance of the triumph of benevolent and charitable feelings toward a Gentile and a Canaanite over the Jewish prejudices of the disciples; it was a proof that they had BEGUN, at least, to imbibe the spirit of their Master. Still, however, for the first time, our blessed Lord *in appearance*, but in appearance only, was deaf to the voice of a suffering and believing suppliant, and answered, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* His personal mission while on earth was to them, and he had not yet accomplished it. So far, however, were the Gentiles from being excluded from the scope and purpose of his ministry on earth, that he was even then training up apostles to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" and in a few instances, even during his stay on earth, he extended both temporal and spiritual mercies to individuals of different nations.

Verse 25. *Then came she and worshipped him, &c.*—Perhaps the foregoing reply to the disciples was made in the hearing of the woman waiting with intense anxiety the result of their application in her behalf; but as she had not been discouraged by his apparently repulsive silence, neither was she driven to despair by those still more forcibly repelling words, *I am not sent but to the house of Israel.* Still, the pressure of her case, and her mighty faith, which yet persuaded her that the Son of David must have mercy upon her, urges her to a more direct attempt. *She came and worshipped him*, throwing her whole case upon his compassion in one burst of agonized feeling,—*Lord, help me.*

Verse 26. *But he answered and said, &c.*—From the known character and compassionate conduct of Christ, as displayed in all former instances, the conclusion in every mind would be, "Now this pleading mother MUST prevail in behalf of her daughter; that daughter is afflicted with the most grievous calamity; that mother is distressed to agony, and lies imploring at his feet who never yet rejected a prayer, and her faith is equal to her earnestness." But a farther trial awaited her; and the reply of our Lord rose even to seeming austerity, and Jewish moroseness:—*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast* it *to dogs.* "Dog," was the common term of contempt used of every Gentile, by the Jews; but our Lord adopted it only to bring forth the pious perseverance of this affectionate mother into so strong a light as to shame those who should, hereafter at least, indiscriminately apply it. He only could safely apply so severe a proof to this good woman; for he well knew the strength of that resolution with which her faith had inspired her.

Verse 27. *And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs, &c.*—Her humility is such that she spurns not at the offensive title; she is too intent upon the case of her daughter: for this she knew too well, that if not relieved by Christ, there was no hope in any other; and, instead of cavilling at the reply, she with admirable readiness, prompted by the working of a heart intent upon its object, finds a reason for urging her request in the very terms of the refusal,—"Let the full provisions of THE TABLE be reserved for the children; but at least let the CRUMBS of thy mercy be vouchsafed to me." Ναι is sometimes a particle of beseeching, as Philemon, verse 20, *ναι, αδελφε, yea, brother, I beseech* thee, brother, and answers to the Hebrew נָא. The rejoinder of this extraordinary woman may therefore be taken to import, "Still I beseech thee, Lord, to help me, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs," &c. Or, if *ναι* be understood to

her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

29 [n] And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 [o] And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 ¶ [p] Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat and were

[n] Mark vii. 31.—[o] Isaiah xxxv, 5.

[p] Mark viii, 1.

mark assent, there is an ellipsis to be supplied, as, "Truth, Lord; but nevertheless grant my request, γαρ, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." This sense is, however, well expressed by the *yet* in our translation.

Verse 28. *O woman, great is thy faith.*—For the manifestation of the power of faith in man, and to commend this great principle to all, the faith of this Canaanite was put to so severe a test; but the moment that end was answered, the compassion of our Lord, which throughout the whole scene had been rising still higher, at once breaks forth in its fulness of grace and power. *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour;* as she found upon her return to her house. It is here most instructive to mark the character of the faith which our Lord thus commends and rewards. It was not faith merely in his Messiahship, though that was the ground of its higher exercises; it was grounded upon the knowledge which the woman had attained of his character, as manifested in his acts of power and compassion; and on this it rested all through the trial to which it was subjected. To his ABILITY and his kindness the piercing eye of that faith looked through all the veils with which even our Lord himself had surrounded them: he was silent, he refused the intercession of his disciples; he answered in the contemptuous language of the Jews to her own imploring supplication; yet still she received no DIRECT denial. The language was contemptuous, but to faith it seemed not to sound like his own; and still she resolutely clung to the full persuasion that he was "full of grace and truth." Such is true faith in its highest exercises in all. It looks through every thing simply to the LOVE, PITY, and POWER of the Saviour; and presses its plea until it triumphantly carries off the blessing.

Verse 30. *The maimed.*—Not deprived of one or more limbs, but the use of them by distortion or paralysis. The *maimed* are by some distinguished from the *lame*, by referring the infirmity of the former to the arms, and that of the latter to the feet; by others the "maimed," κυλλους, are supposed to have suffered *distortion* of the limbs; and "the lame," χωλους, to have been rendered so by accident rather than disease.

Verse 31. *They glorified the God of Israel.*—The place where these astonishing miracles were wrought was near the sea of Galilee; yet, in a desert place into which the multitudes had followed him: and if we consider the number and nature of the miracles suddenly effected upon all who came or were brought to Christ; the joy which the afflicted persons themselves must have manifested at their instant and perfect relief from the most melancholy infirmities, as blindness and dumbness, and from the most painful sicknesses and infirmities; the absence of the Pharisees; whose captious and detracting remarks did not here interpose to prevent the full flow of those grateful feelings which the people at large had so often manifested,—we cannot wonder that the deserts of Galilee were made to resound with the high praises of the God of Israel. To this multitude, so well disposed, and many of whom we may believe were afterward gathered unto the Christian Church, and numbered with true believers, our Lord farther showed his compassion by working a miracle similar to that by which he fed the five thousand near Bethsaida. From *seven loaves and a few small fishes*, after *giving thanks*, and distributing them to the disciples, as in the former instance, he supplied their wants, after they had expended their pro-

filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

visions, having been *with him three days*. See notes on chap. xiv, 15, &c.

Verse 37. *And they took up of the broken meat seven baskets full.*—The word here rendered *basket* is σπυρις, and differs from κοφινος, the basket before mentioned. The latter was suspended from the shoulder, the other was carried by hand and was probably of smaller dimensions.

Verse 39. *The coasts of Magdala.*—These were on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *The Pharisees require a sign.* 6 *Jesus warneth his disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* 13 *The people's opinion of Christ,* 16 *and Peter's confession of him.* 21 *Jesus foreshoweth his death,* 23 *reproving Peter for dissuading him from it:* 24 *and admonishes those that will follow him to bear the cross.*

1 [a] The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

[a] Mark viii, 11; Luke xii, 54–56.

CHAPTER XVI. Verse 1. *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came.*—These were not the Pharisees from Jerusalem mentioned in the preceding chapter, but persons of these sects residing in Galilee. Between the Sadducees and Pharisees there were great differences of opinion; but in their enmity to Christ all were united, whether in Jerusalem or in other parts of the country.

And tempting him, desired that he would give them a sign from heaven.—To *tempt* signifies to put his claims as Messiah to the test. This test, however, was one devised by themselves: and, as in chap. xii, 38, it was to be the exhibition of *a sign from heaven;* by which they may be supposed to have meant a luminous appearance, or thunder, or the descent of fire, or some other prodigy similar to some of those mentioned in the Old Testament. It is not easy to say what led these Jewish sects to agree, as they appear to have done, in fixing upon a sign in the heavens as a proof of the appearance of Messiah. They have by some been thought to derive this from a literal interpretation of Dan. vii, 13, where the "Son of man" is said to "come with the clouds of heaven;" but as he is there represented as coming in this manner that he might appear before the Ancient of days, it is scarcely to be admitted that they could so interpret this of his appearance among MEN; nor is there a portion of prophecy which speaks of any extraordinary appearance in, or sign from heaven, as to be given by Messiah in demonstration of his claims. It is more probable that, as there had been an agreement among the Pharisees, both in Jerusalem and in Galilee, to account for the miracles of Christ, and to destroy their evidence, as proofs of his Divine mission, by attributing them to Satan; so, as they had observed that his extraordinary works were chiefly miracles of healing, and dispensations of mercy which had in view the communication of some practical benefit, that they fixed upon *signs* of quite a different kind and order, as flaming fires, destructive thunderbolts, &c., as necessary proofs, well knowing that he was not likely to show them at their request, and thus to create a pretence for their own incredulity, and to counteract among the people the impression of his miracles, by disparaging them as not worthy to be compared to signs from heaven. Or this expectation might rest upon their own vain traditions; which is rendered somewhat probable by this, that their late writers speak of such phenomena as among the signs of Messiah. The appearance of an extraordinary rainbow, for instance, is mentioned as one of these indications.—Whatever origin this notion might have, it was not for want of evidence that they continued in unbelief. This is sufficiently proved by their disregarding even *signs from heaven.* On one occasion there was a sign of this kind so manifest that the people said, "An angel spoke to him;" yet the Pharisees did not believe. There were signs from heaven at the crucifixion; and, by the testimony of the Roman soldiers, on the morning of the resurrection; and, finally, on the day of pentecost; and yet they continued contemptuously to reject the truth. It was therefore the state of their hearts which occasioned that blind and determined unbelief which ultimately caused their ruin. Their obstinate

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O *ye* hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed.

5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

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insensibility to the plainest evidence is reproved by what follows. See note on Mark viii. 12.

Verse 3. *The signs of the times.*—By this our Lord doubtless means those strong proofs already given, in the very aspect of public events, of the Messiah being come, but which they utterly disregarded. One of these was the departure of the sceptre from Judah, according to the prediction of Jacob; for Judea was now a Roman province, and what remained of power in Galilee, and the neighbouring districts, to their last race of kings, Herod and his descendants, was fast passing away, and was indeed altogether dependent upon the Romans. Another was the appearance of the forerunner of our Lord, in the person of the Baptist, who had so established the authority of his mission, that "all the people held John to be a prophet;" but, if a prophet of God at all, then his testimony was necessarily true; and he had pointed to Jesus himself as the Christ. To these were to be added the character and conduct of our Lord, which so exactly answered to prophetic description; the fact that a great and extraordinary teacher had appeared among them, learned in the law without being taught in their schools, speaking as never man spoke, refuting all objections, exposing all errors, and instructing all who would follow him, in the purest doctrines, expressed with superhuman eloquence, and confirmed by the greatest miracles, publicly wrought, extending to innumerable cases, conferring the most signal blessings, and filling the country with the most indubitable witnesses of his mission. These were the "signs of the times," strongly marked by the finger of God; which yet, plain and palpable as they were, the Pharisees and Sadducees disregarded. They could discern the face of the sky, and, by carefully marking the atmospheric phenomena of their climate a matter to which their "wise men" applied themselves with attention, laid down the prognostics of the weather which would follow; but they refused to apply the same carefulness and seriousness to mark "the signs of the times;" to consider their character, to inquire what they indicated, and to draw their conclusions as honestly, and as much without prejudice, as in the case of the signs of the weather. They are, therefore, called "hypocrites;" and this part of their conduct proved how truly they were so.—They professed to be in quest of evidence to ascertain whether Messiah had come, and they neglected all that had for years been urged upon them. They could not dispute it, but they rejected it, because they had not some other sign which God in his prophetic word had never promised to give, and which could not, in the nature of things, be more convincing than those already before their eyes. It was not truth, therefore, that they sought; and they were justly charged with hypocrisy for pretending it.

Verse 4. *A wicked and adulterous generation.*—See note on chap. xii. 39.

And he left them, and departed.—As persons wholly incorrigible, he took no farther pains with them, but *departed* to the vessel in which he had arrived, and passed over to the other side of the lake.

Verse 5. *Forgotten to take bread.*—For they had no more, says St. Mark, than one loaf in the ship; and had probably been so intent upon our Lord's discourse, and had embarked so suddenly, as to forget to purchase provision, which was the more necessary, as they landed in an unfrequented place, and had before them a considerable journey toward Cesarea Philippi.

Verse 7. *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.*—Lightfoot illustrates the meaning by referring to a practice of the Jewish doctors, who frequently forbade their disciples to buy the bread of heathens and Samaritans, which was a partaking of their leaven. This well connects the observation of our Lord with the occasion, although the disciples were perplexed as to his meaning. They could not understand him literally, for they were not likely to buy bread of the opulent Pharisees and Sadducees, nor were they in a place where they could buy it at all, being in a desert; and they did not as yet lay hold of the spiritual meaning of his words. On this account *they reasoned among themselves*, both as to the supply of their necessities, and what might be the meaning of their Lord's words.

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 [b] Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 [c] Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, [d] Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

[b] Matt. xiv, 17.—[c] Matt. xv, 34.

[d] Mark viii, 27; Luke ix, 18.

This clearly appears, because our Lord's reproof relates both to their want of faith as to supplies, and their want of a prompt spiritual discernment.

Verse 12. *But of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*—Leaven is usually the metaphor for evil affections; but here, and in Gal. v, 9, it is used for bad *doctrine*, which actively diffuses itself, and in the results corrupts and vitiates. St. Mark says, "And the leaven of Herod," because Herod was a Sadducee, and the head therefore of the Sadducees of Galilee, with whom the conversation had been held.

Verse 13. *Cesarea Philippi.*—This city was situated at the foot of the mountain Paneas, whence flow the springs or source of the river Jordan. It was anciently called Laish and Paneas, and was rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch, who gave it the name of Cesarea, in honor of Tiberius Cesar, and added Philippi from his own name, to distinguish it from Cesarea, a seaport on the Mediterranean, formerly called Strato's Tower, and magnificently rebuilt by Herod the Great, Philip's father, and named in honour of Augustus Cesar. The city is destroyed, but the circuit of the walls is still discernible.—A few miserable huts inhabited by Mohammedans stand upon its site.

Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?—This question, as we learn from Mark, was put to the disciples as he was travelling to visit the towns of this district; and from St. Luke we have the farther particulars, that it was when he was alone with them, and had been engaged in prayer.

Some, by altering the pointing, resolve this question into two, "Whom do men say that I am? The Son of man?" But, though the ancient MSS. were written without points, and to supply them is the work of criticism, regard must always be paid to the most obvious sense, and to the construction; and as the second question is made to begin without any interrogative particle, as μη, or μητι, usage is violated. Beside, it is clear from the answer that our Lord did not inquire whether the people said that he was the Son of man or Messiah, to which their reply is as indirect an answer as can be conceived; but indefinitely, what were the reports respecting him. The question must, therefore, be taken as one. Our Lord declares himself, as he had often done, to be THE SON OF MAN; and asks, *Whom do men*, the people in general, *say that I am?* There is, however, no reason to suppose, with other commentators, that our Lord intended, by calling himself "the Son of man," to intimate emphatically his low and humble condition. This is the title of Messiah, as given by Daniel, who, by using it, doubtless predicted his incarnation; but it is one which does not necessarily imply humiliation, inasmuch as he is now, though glorified, as much the Son of man as when he sojourned upon earth; that is to say, as truly a human being. Stephen saw THE SON OF MAN standing at the right hand of God. This was the prophetic designation of the Messiah, and as such our Lord had adopted it; and no other reason can indeed be assigned for its use. It is therefore a most unsupported opinion of Macknight, that our Lord had not yet directly declared to his disciples that he was the Messiah. The use of this very title, from the commencement of his ministry, was a declaration of it; beside that all those of his apostles who had been disciples of John the Baptist had left their master and joined Christ, on the ground of the former having borne his testimony that Jesus was the Messiah, of whom he himself was the forerunner. Under this persuasion too, all his other disciples had joined themselves to him. The question then in the text is the same as if he had said, "Whom do men say that I, THE MESSIAH, am? What are the opinions of those who have not acknowledged me under that character?" Lightfoot, indeed, conjectures that Christ inquires *what kind of person* they thought him to be; since τινα, rendered *whom*, often relates to the quality of the person: but quality here is no farther intended than as it would be involved with the particular character men might judge our Lord to be, as the answer of the disciples suffi-

14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and

ciently proves. Some MSS. omit με, which, however, makes no difference in the sense, since Christ is evidently speaking of himself. Griesbach marks it as only doubtful; but, as it has been well observed, it would be less difficult to account for its omission in some MSS. than for its insertion in others.

Verse 14. *John the Baptist, &c.*—From this answer of the disciples it has been contended by some commentators, that the Pharisees held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and supposed that the soul of John, or Elijah, or of one of the prophets, had assumed the body of our Lord; forgetting that these opinions of Christ were not those of the Pharisees, who had no views so honourable of our Saviour, but of the people at large, and especially those of Galilee, among whom this doctrine of the Greek and oriental philosophy was not probably heard of. Nor is it at all clear that any of the Jewish sects held this notion of the metempsychosis. The Sadducees, who were materialists, could not entertain it; and all the evidence for the Pharisees having adopted it, is an equivocal passage in Josephus, which appears rather to regard the resurrection of the body at the last day. But the case is determined by other considerations. It appears from chap. xiv, 2, that Herod had heard it as a common rumour that John had *risen from the dead* in the person of Jesus; not that his soul had passed into a new body. And with respect to *the prophets* also mentioned, St. Luke has it, "And others say that one of the old prophets *is risen again*;" so that whether they thought Jesus to be John, or Elias, or one of the prophets, they conceived of him as one "risen from the dead." The notion that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead, could only exist in those parts of the country, distant from the scenes of their joint or neighbouring ministrations. This was, however, in a limited district, and John's public ministry soon terminated after that of Christ commenced. The report, however, shows the great veneration in which John was held, for the popularity of our Lord in Galilee was now very great. As for Elijah, the Jews, taking the prophecy of Malachi literally, expected that illustrious prophet in person; (see note on chap xi, 14;) and being greatly perplexed as to the mysterious character of our Lord, the solution in which others rested was, that Elias had risen and appeared in him, though under another name. That the Jews expected Jeremiah, rather than any other of the prophets in particular, appears from this passage, although the addition of, *or one of the prophets*, shows that they were not very confident. Several reasons have been given by commentators for their having fixed upon Jeremiah, but none of them are satisfactory. They are chiefly taken from the rabbinical writings, and are the speculations of later ages, without having sufficient proof that they preserve the sentiments of our Lord's time on this point, which was indeed less a rabbinical than a popular notion. Here too it is to be noted that our Lord makes no remark upon these various opinions, for he suffers the statement of them by the disciples to pass in silence; the only reason for his asking the question, as to the opinion entertained of him by others, being to give them an occasion of solemnly declaring their own. Hence he subjoins, *But whom say ye that I am?*

Verse 16. *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, &c.*—On this confession of Peter it may be remarked, 1. That it was made by Peter in the name of the rest of the apostles, for the question was put to them *collectively*, "Whom say ye that I am?" And the answer is to be taken in the same way. 2. That the confession has two great parts, "*Thou art* THE CHRIST," is the first part; and the Messiah, taken alone, might be held without any higher conceptions of his nature than were entertained by the majority of the Jews and their teachers in that day. That the views entertained of the Messiah by the Jews of that age were very various, is not only a natural inference, for ancient truth does not all at once vanish from the minds of a whole people, but is made certain by the different opinions entertained of our Lord during his ministry, by those who either did acknowledge him to be the Christ, or were withheld from doing so, not by their want of conviction, but from the fear of persecution. A few only, such as Nathanael, attached the ancient idea of Divinity to the title Messiah; others seem to have regarded the Messiah as a glorious but middle being between God and men; others an angel, others a supernaturally endowed man. The two latter were the prevalent notions, and these lower conceptions of his character would prevail just as the expectation of the re-establishment of a temporal sovereignty prevailed, or by a gross interpretation of the prophecies was carnalized by the growing worldliness of their minds. From about the time of the birth of our Lord, they appear to have become increasingly uneasy under the Roman power, and the desire to be avenged of it, and rescued from its control, was at length wrought up to passion and infatuation. The progress of this feeling among

said, [e] Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That

[e] St. John, chap. vi, 69.

the Jews, all through the life of our Lord, will account for the constantly diminishing views of Messiah's character, as compared with the faith of their fathers. For earthly wars, conquests, and cares, a mere man, if endowed with power to command signs from heaven, thunders, hail storms, lightnings, to blast the enemies of Israel, or at most an angel, would by such be naturally thought a Messiah quite adequate to accomplish all they expected, and, in fact, all they desired. THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD is therefore emphatically added, to express Peter's own view and that of the other disciples of the *true nature* of him whom they acknowledged to be the Christ; an acknowledgment not now made by them for the first time; for, after he had walked on the water, and had come into the vessel, all the disciples "worshipped him, saying," in the most emphatic manner, "OF A TRUTH THOU ART THE SON OF GOD." That confession, indeed, they had made in a moment of great excitement, occasioned by a most impressive display of his Divine power over the elements; but now they make it calmly and deliberately. 3. That the title SON OF GOD is a designation of nature, not of office, like that of THE CHRIST. The latter, indeed, is a noble part of the confession, for it includes all those high offices to which he was ANOINTED by the Holy Ghost, and which are so largely dwelt upon in the prophetic Scriptures; but the title, "Son of God," is added, and stands in manifest opposition to the phrase, "the Son of man," in the question of our Lord, which, though a designation of Messiah, is founded altogether upon his real humanity. By this he was declared both to be the Messiah, and truly a man; but was he nothing more? The disciples in the ship, and now Peter in their name, again reply in the affirmative, and call him THE SON OF GOD, the Son of the LIVING GOD, which is the high and distinguishing appellation of Jehovah, in opposition to dead idols. That this title, the Son of God, was given by the disciples with reference to their faith in our Lord's Divine nature, although as yet the mystery of the Trinity was not so distinctly revealed to them as afterwards, is rendered indubitable by the sense put upon that very phrase by the Jews themselves. Of its universally received import the gospels afford complete evidence, and that both as to the popular sense in which it was understood, and with which, therefore, the disciples could not be unacquainted, and also of the interpretation put upon it by the learned. As to the first, we have this pregnant instance, that when our Lord, amidst an indiscriminate company of hearers, claimed God as his *proper Father*, the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and took up stones to stone him. And of the second we have evidence in the fact, that he was tried and condemned before the Jewish sanhedrim on a charge of blasphemy, grounded upon this fact, that he professed to be THE SON OF GOD? "Then said they all, Art thou then THE SON OF GOD? And he saith unto them, Ye say that I am;" thereby affirming it. And they said, "What need we any farther witness? for we ourselves have heard out of his own mouth;" and "the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken *blasphemy*. Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy, what think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of DEATH." So fully demonstrated is it, by these two facts alone, that the title, "Son of God," was considered by the Jews to involve an assumption of the Divine nature, which Jesus himself did not deny; but, by his entire silence as to his having used the term in any lower sense, most forcibly and infallibly confirmed. See note on chap. xxvi, 63.

Verse 17. *Simon Bar-jona.*—The son of Jona, or Jonah, which was the name of his father; these patronymics being in frequent use among the Jews.

Flesh and blood hath not revealed, &c.—Flesh and blood is the Hebrew periphrasis for *man;* and the meaning of our Lord is, that Peter had not derived this knowledge of Christ from his own sagacity, or from the teaching of man, or from the notions respecting the nature of Messiah current among the Jews, but from the special teaching of THE FATHER, giving him a right understanding of these great truths, and a docile disposition to yield to those demonstrations of them which he had beheld in the works of Christ. Nor is this to be understood exclusively of Peter, but of all the other apostles, whose knowledge of this mystery could only come from the same source, the revelation of the Father; and as Peter was on this account pronounced *blessed*, so was the benediction pronounced through him upon them all; for as he had answered in the name of the rest, so he receives the blessing as representing the rest.

Verse 18. *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, &c.*—Here, again, the key to our Lord's meaning is that peculiarity in his teaching which, by the use of beautiful and easily understood enigmas, and by taking

thou art [f] Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[f] St. John, chap. i, 42.

terms in a literal and figurative sense in the same sentence, or giving a lower and a higher application of the same term, for the moment involves his meaning in obscurity, only to unveil it in greater force and clearness to attentive minds. In this passage our Lord confirms to Simon the new name of Peter, which had before been given him, instead of his old name Simon Bar-jona. It was not unusual for the Jewish doctors to impose new names upon their disciples; and our Lord, in this instance, had followed the example, having given the name of Cephas to Simon, "which is by interpretation a stone," at his first calling, John i, 42. That it was not considered improper in a Jew to use a name derived from the Greeks or Latins, is also clear from the example of Saul, who assumed the name of Paul, or Paulus. Peter, Πετρος, signifies a stone or rock, and from this signification of his name our Lord declares that he should be a foundation stone upon which he would build his Church: "Thou art Peter," a stone, and επι ταυτη τη πετρα, upon this stone, this *foundation stone*, "will I build my Church." The Papists take the words to have been addressed to Peter exclusively, and ground upon this famous and oft-controverted passage their notion of the supremacy of Peter and his successors; while many Protestants, in order to rebut this conclusion, contend that the foundation on which the Church was to be built, was either Christ, who is supposed to have pointed to himself with his finger; or the profession of faith which Peter had just made. The latter view was also that of Chrysostom, τη πετρα—τουτεστι, τη πιστει της ομολογιας, "Upon the rock, that is, the faith of his profession." In favour of this, an argument has been founded by some upon the difference of termination between Πετρος and Πετρα. If the apostle, say they, had himself been the rock, our Lord would not have changed the term to η πετρα; and it would have been more direct to have said, Thou art Peter, and upon thee will I build, &c. But this change of gender is sufficiently explained by the figurative manner in which our Lord must on every scheme of interpretation be supposed to have spoken. After all that has been said, the most natural interpretation of the words is that which refers them to Peter. His name signified a stone, and our Lord, taking the term figuratively in his usual manner, says, Upon this stone will I build my Church, meaning unquestionably not upon Peter's person, but upon Peter's office and ministry, which—as that necessarily includes Peter's doctrine, for his ministry was to teach that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the only true object of the trust of men for salvation—brings us, in fact, around to the opinion of those who hold that the true foundation referred to is Peter's profession of faith. No ill consequence can therefore result from allowing that Peter was intended as the foundation on which the Church was to be built, when that necessary distinction is made, that Peter is not spoken of as *a man*, but as an *apostle*, whose sole office it was to bring men to trust in Christ alone for salvation; for from hence it follows that the doctrine he taught was the true foundation of the Church. But here again it is to be observed that although Peter is addressed, it is still as before, not exclusively, but as the *representative* of the rest of the apostles. They had all joined in the same confession: they had all been taught of the *Father*, not by flesh and blood; they had all been pronounced *blessed* in the blessing pronounced upon Peter; and now Peter's name is enigmatically made use of to show that they were all, collectively, in their office and doctrine, to be the foundation of the Christian Church; and thus this passage is in entire harmony with that of St. Paul: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone:" where we see no distinction made among the apostles, but all are represented as constituting the foundation of a building the chief corner stone of which is Christ. It corresponds also with the representation of the city or Church of God, the new Jerusalem, which had twelve foundations, bearing "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Peter stands foremost on several occasions in the history of the gospels, and he was chosen, notwithstanding his foul offence, the denial of his Master, to preach the first evangelical sermon to the Jews, and to be the first also to open the gate of faith to the Gentiles: but the notion of his supremacy over the other apostles is a pure fiction: no shadow of evidence appears in the history of the New Testament in favour of it; nay, on the contrary, he was "withstood," by St. Paul, "to the face," in a matter of indecision, for which that apostle declares "he was to be blamed." St. Paul, therefore, allowed him neither infallibility nor supremacy.

My Church.—The Church of Christ is the assembly of true believers. The word itself, εκκλησια, signifies *a public assembly*; but, in a religious sense, an assembly collected for the public confession and worship of Christ, united in affection as brethren, and pledged to walk by the rules of their Divine Master. Every society of true Christians is a Church,

for such particular societies are so denominated in the New Testament; but the body of the faithful throughout the world constitutes THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, and it is in this general sense that the term is here used. It is not the Church of Jerusalem, nor the Church of Rome, nor the Church of Antioch, or of any other place, nor any body of Christians distinguished from others by some external peculiarity; but all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in every place. This Church is here and in other places compared to a building, "a spiritual house," "a temple," because it is established for spiritual ends, and for holy services; and its members are called "living stones" in the building, not merely as they are living men; but as persons quickened into spiritual life, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the gates of hell, &c.—Αιδης, rendered *hell* in our translation, does not necessarily mean the place of the punishment of the wicked, but generally *the world of the dead, the unseen world*, from *a* privative and ειδω, *to see*. It is the vast receptacle of disembodied human spirits until the resurrection, having two regions, one of the blessed, or, as the Hebrews called it, paradise; the other, the abyss or gehenna, the place where the wicked are collected, and are in a state of misery. This lower region is also the abode of evil spirits or devils, though not rigidly so, since they are permitted to have access to our world; while paradise is inhabited not only by the departed faithful, but by the angels of God. Figuratively, this region of the dead, and particularly with reference to them, is said to have *gates*, the keys of which are in the hands of Christ, so that "he opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens;" by which we are to understand his absolute power over life and death, and that his dominion extends not only over earth, but into the world of spirits, and is absolute over all the beings which it contains,—angels, devils, and men. The promise, *that the gates of hades shall not prevail* against the Church has been differently understood by interpreters. Since hades is the place of the spirits of the dead, the *gates* of hades have been understood to mean *death*. Thus Isa. xxxviii, 10, "I shall go to the gates of the grave, εν πυλαις αδου, meaning *I shall die*. And Wisdom xvi, 13, "Thou leadest to the gates of hades, εις πυλας αδου, and bringest up again." The import of the promise is therefore taken to be, My Church shall endure for ever; death shall not so prevail against it that it shall ever become extinct, but it shall continue from generation to generation to the end of time. But though this be an important and encouraging sense, it does not well comport with the imagery of the text. The idea suggested by the Church being built upon massive foundation stones, intimates its power to resist assaults of war, like the strong fortresses of antiquity, built upon the strongest sites; and the word κατισχυω, used in the text, indicates the application of violent force, as of an assault of enemies to vanquish and subdue; a metaphor which cannot well be applied to express the slow and silent wastes of death. We must therefore look for another interpretation, and this is intimated to us by other scriptures. In the book of Revelation hades is represented as a region under the government of death as its sovereign: this is one instance of striking personification applied to this subject. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the devil is represented as a sovereign who has "the power of death," whose dominion our Lord was "to abolish." This is an instance in which we see Satan brought into immediate collocation with the ravages of death, and the state of separate spirits. By hades we may therefore understand that region which is not only the receptacle of the wicked dead, but the abode of the devil and his angels, who are represented as having dominion there, and who issue from this ABYSS to carry on their ravages among men, to oppose the life-giving and saving doctrine of Christ, and to disturb and destroy the Church, which is the shelter of souls from their malice and wiles. Now, as the strongly fortified GATES of cities were anciently the places, not only where the sovereign and his chief men, the elders, sat to give judgment, but also to hold their councils and arrange their plans of peace or war; by a metaphor easily understood, our Lord promises that all the counsels of Satan against the Church, and the wars he may wage by his agents to overthrow it, shall never so *prevail* against it as to vanquish and subdue it. Such has been the glorious fact; the Church still survives the conflicts of centuries; it still lives and flourishes, in spite of persecutions and corruptions: from its lowest depressions it has risen with renovated vigour; and it is again seen carrying on offensive and successful warfare against the kingdom of darkness throughout the world. To this day the fulfilment of this prophetic promise gives clear and powerful evidence to the truth of the Gospel. These words of our Lord also secure to us the continuance of the Church, not of any particular Church, but of the Church universal; the world shall never be without true believers, openly confessing Christ and maintaining the institutions of his religion; for αυτης is more naturally taken to refer to the εκκλησιαν, and not to the foundation stone, because the former is the nearest antecedent; but in either way the sense is the same, for the foundation would only be declared perpetual with reference to the edifice which it is in all ages to sustain.

Verse 19. *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.*—Some

19 [g] And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

[g] St. John, chap. xx, 23.

who apply these words to Peter exclusively, understand by the gift of *the keys* the honour assigned to Peter to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the perfected evangelical dispensation, to the Jews at the day of pentecost, and then afterward to the Gentiles, when he went down to Cornelius at Cesarea. Others, as the Papists, understand by the phrase the committal of a special authority to Peter over the Church of Christ, of which it is certain that we have no evidence or illustration in the New Testament. The emblem of the keys was a familiar one to the apostles, if the later Jewish writers have correctly described the ancient ceremony of constituting a rabbi or doctor of the law; for according to them the person admitted to this office had a key given to him as an emblem both of his ability and duty to OPEN THE MEANING of the law, which key he wore as a badge of his office. Still, without any reference to this custom, supposing it as old as our Lord's day, the figure very naturally expresses the opening of "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" BY PUBLIC TEACHING, and so setting open the doors of evangelical knowledge, and, by consequence, of the Christian Church.—This is a much more natural exposition of the emblem in this connection, than that which regards it as significant of the committal of power and authority to govern the Church; and is indeed pointed out with great clearness to be its meaning, by what follows as to the power of *binding* and *loosing*, which must be taken as exegetical of the power of the keys. These expressions are manifestly Jewish, and may therefore be satisfactorily explained by reference to this mode of speaking. With the Jews to bind and loose was a usual phrase for declaring what was lawful or unlawful; what was BINDING upon men's consciences; and that from the obligation of which they were LOOSED or free. Lightfoot, Schoetgenius, and others, have produced a great number of examples from the rabbinical writings; one or two instances will suffice. "He asked one wise man, and he bound; do not ask another, lest perhaps he *loose*." "The school of Schammai *binds* it; the school of Hillel *looseth* it." "Get thyself a heart to hear the words of them that pronounce unclean, and the words of them that pronounce clean; the words of them that *bind*, and the words of them that *loose*; the words of them that reject, and the words of them that declare it right." Under these terms, therefore, our Lord gave his disciples authority to declare the laws of the Gospel dispensation under the guidance of his own teaching and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; which authoritative declaration of the terms of man's forgiveness, and how Christians ought to walk so as to secure the approbation of God, and that infliction of the Divine displeasure which should follow disobedience, he promises should be confirmed *in heaven*; as constituting his own law and rule of moral government to be laid down by them, first in their preaching and then in their writings.—It is this which distinguishes those writings from all others. They not only contain a revelation of truth from God, but they have an authority as LAW derived from this,—that God himself acts upon them. Whatever the apostles have in those writings BOUND is a matter of conscience: it must be obeyed, not of choice merely, but necessity, since our salvation depends upon it; but whatever they have not bound is LOOSE to us: we are free from it, and no lower authority can make it binding upon the conscience, or connect with our disregard of it the penalty of the Divine displeasure. But that this promise looked to that future time when they should be fully qualified for this great office, is evident from what took place after Christ's resurrection, when the same power, under a somewhat different form, but of precisely the same import, was ratified. After breathing upon them, he said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." To qualify them for this authoritative declaration of what was *obligatory* upon men or otherwise, and of the *terms* upon which sins are remitted, and the circumstances under which they are retained, they previously received the Holy Ghost; a sufficient proof that this power was connected with the plenary inspiration of the apostles, and beyond them it cannot extend. The manner, also, in which the apostles exercised this power elucidates the subject, which has been greatly abused in the Romish and some other Churches. We have no instance of their forgiving the sins of any individual by virtue of any authority deposited with them, much less did they affect to transmit this power to their successors.—They merely proclaimed and laid down the terms of pardon under the authority of Christ. And we have no instance of their "retaining the sins", of any one, except by declaring the offender condemned by the laws of the Gos-

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

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pel, of which they were the teachers.—They authoritatively explain in their writings the terms of forgiveness; and, as to duty, they state what is obligatory, or not obligatory, upon Christians; they pronounce sinners of various kinds to be under God's wrath, and they declare certain apostates to be put beyond forgiveness, but by their unbelief and blasphemies, and not by apostolic excommunication; and thus they *bound* or *loosed*, *remitted sins or retained them*. It is also to be remarked, as on the preceding verses, that whatever this power was, it was not given exclusively to Peter. Still he stands before the Lord as the representative of the rest of the apostles, and receives nothing but what they all received; and hence, in chapter xviii, 18, our Lord says to them collectively, and in the plural form of address, "Whatsoever YE shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." God will act upon your inspired decisions.

Verse 20. *That they should tell no man, that he was Jesus the Christ.*—Many Greek MSS. and several versions omit in this clause the name *Jesus*, which indeed appears superfluous, and under this impression might be omitted by some transcribers; it may, nevertheless, be emphatic. The apostles were here strictly prohibited from *telling*, or openly proclaiming, their faith in his high character, not merely as *the Christ;* but, as St. Luke has it, "the Christ of God;" which appears to be but an elliptical mode of stating the whole confession they had just made, that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." The sense appears to be, not that they were inhibited from generally expressing their faith in him as the Messiah, though *that* they were not to do officiously, and rather by their conduct as following him under that character as his disciples; but that they were not openly to declare their belief that he was "the Christ of God," Christ, under those high conceptions of his nature which they had received from the teaching of the Father. The reason appears to be, not fear of the Romans, as stated by some, lest they should connect the confession of his Messiahship with the intention of making him king; but more probably, either because they were not as yet qualified to defend those deep doctrines which were involved in these views of his character; or, more especially, because he, as yet, reserved it wholly to himself, in the difficult circumstances in which he was placed, to explain who he was at the most fitting times and seasons, and to confirm every claim as he should advance it, both by his arguments of superhuman wisdom, and his miraculous works. This reason for the prohibition is free from the difficulty which the usual interpretation suggests. For why, it may be asked, should the apostles at that period of Christ's ministry, have been restrained from telling any man simply, that they believed him to be the Messiah, when they openly followed him as such, and when he himself, in no mysterious manner, had so often intimated the same thing, and grounded his whole ministry upon it? But around the character of the Messiah himself, a great obscurity hung in the minds of the Jews, and with great mystery our Lord had generally chosen to invest his own. The apostles who had been now so long "with him," had glanced within this veil, and been favoured with special manifestations of his concealed glory; but even they were yet "weak in faith," and of obscure understanding in what "the prophets had spoken." The faith they had was not as yet, therefore, to be openly proclaimed: it was their office yet to abide with their Master *to learn*, and his exclusively *to teach*. See the note on Mark iii, 12.

Verse 21. *Began Jesus to show unto his disciples.*—That is, more particularly and explicitly than before; not in dark sayings or occasional instructions.

Elders, chief priests, and scribes.—These three orders composed the sanhedrim or great council. The elders were the senators, and are to be distinguished from the elders of cities, who were heads of the inferior courts of justice. From the term elders, which included the idea of both rank and age, the council was sometimes called Πρεσβυτεριον. The chief priests, the heads of the courses of the priests, appear to have been members of the council by virtue of their office, and the scribes were assessors as learned assistants.

Verse 22. *Then Peter took him.*—Of the various senses given to προσλάβομενος, in this passage, some of a rude, and others of a tender and respectful import, the most probable is that of taking by the hand or arm: an action natural to one who would remonstrate with another to whom he was fervently attached.

And began to rebuke him.—The term *rebuke*, in our translation, appears too strong.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 ¶ [h] Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life

[h] Matt. x, 38; Mark viii, 34.

The earnest *remonstrance* of one who, neither on his own account, nor that of his Master, could bear to hear the subject of his sufferings and death, appears all that is indicated: and our Lord's stern reproof is not directed against the manner of Peter's address; but against those gross and carnal views of the Messiah's kingdom and glory which still clung to him, and influenced his judgment and feelings.

Be it far from thee.—Ιλεως σοι, literally, *Be merciful to thyself*, but a phrase used by the Septuagint for a Hebrew word, which signifies *God forbid*, or *far be it;* and is here to be taken not as an entreaty of Peter to Christ, to deliver himself from impending danger by an exertion of his power, but as a passionate exclamation of forbidding or aversion: hence he adds, *This shall not be unto thee:* it cannot be; it is a thought not to be conceived.

Verse 23. *But he turned.*—St. Mark says, "When he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter;" from which it appears that Peter, in *taking hold* of Christ, had drawn him a little aside from the rest of the disciples; but, as our Lord designed to rebuke Peter in the presence of them all, he turned to them to be the more distinctly heard.

Get thee behind me, Satan.—It was nearly in these words that our Lord rebuked Satan himself at the close of his great temptation, and the force of this rebuke as to Peter was greatly heightened by applying to him the name of Satan himself. This was not done in the sense of *adversary*, the import of the word; for this scarcely suggests a meaning as applied to Peter; but as intimating to him and the rest that in this, though unconsciously, he was the agent of Satan, who, making use of Peter's remaining worldly views as to the Messiah, and his consequent repugnance to the doctrine of his Lord's death, did in fact, by his instrumentality, attempt to assail our Lord's constancy, and to excite in him a reluctance to suffer. This appears the most satisfactory way of accounting for the apparent severity of Christ's calling Peter by the name Satan; for he was, in fact, thereby told that he had rendered himself, by his want of spiritual views, the agent of him whose grand design was to obstruct the work of human redemption. And we can conceive of no occasion more fitly chosen than this by the wily tempter, to produce an impression upon the natural feelings of our Lord, when one of his disciples, who no doubt fully expressed the sentiments of the rest, remonstrated with him, from the very fulness of his affection, not to expose himself to danger and death. This is farther confirmed by what follows, *Thou art an offence to me, σκανδαλον, a stumbling block, a hinderance;* for by appealing to the natural horror of suffering and death to which our Lord's human nature was subject, and to resist which by an invincible resignation was one of his most illustrious virtues, Satan, through Peter, did what in him lay to shake his resolution, and to hinder the accomplishment of the purposes of his infinite love.

Thou savourest not the things that be of God, &c.—The word φρονεω in Romans viii, 5, is rendered "to mind," or to regard, and has here the same sense. Peter acknowledged the glory of Christ's nature, but, with the expectation of spiritual blessings from him as Messiah, mingled that of an external national reign, and all those external benefits most pleasing to worldly men. The death of Christ at the hands of the great council of the nation was fatal to anticipations of the latter kind; and this consideration, united with his affection for Christ, had excited in him so great an impatience at the annunciation of Christ that he must suffer and die. Or the meaning may be, that he regarded in the case only what was agreeable to human nature, as all exemption from suffering must be; and not those counsels, and that supreme will of God, to which every thing ought to be sacrificed.

Verse 24. *If any man will come after me, &c.*—Our Lord not only rebuked Peter for endeavouring to turn him from his own purpose of surrendering himself to suffering and death; but takes occasion from it to prepare his disciples not for the honours of an earthly kingdom, but for a similar course of self-denial, and for submission to death itself. The verb απαρνεομαι, *to deny*, has two significations. The first is, to *disown acquaintance or connection with any;* and in this sense it is well illustrated by St. Jerome: "He that putteth off the old man with his works denieth himself; the unchaste, being converted to modest manners, does by his present chastity deny his former licentiousness; he that was once cowardly and timid, by becoming strong in fortitude knows not his former self; the unjust man who now cultivates justice

shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;

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denies his former iniquitous course; and not only in times of persecution and martyrdom, but in all our conversation, thoughts, doings, and discourse, we must deny what we were before." The second sense is to *renounce and disregard;* and for the disciple in this respect to deny himself, is to disregard all personal consideration of ease, honour, liberty, and life, when they come into competition with his allegiance to Christ. *And take up his cross*, patiently submitting to every kind of sufferings, and even to die an ignominious and cruel death, like Christ himself, when called to it. "Not making the cross," says Mr. Baxter, "but taking and bearing it when it is laid upon him, and follow Christ by sufferings to glory." See note on chap. x, 38.

Verse 25. *Save his life shall lose it.*—See note on chap. x, 39.

Verse 26. *And lose his own soul.*—The word ψυχη, here translated *soul*, is the word used for *life* in the preceding verse; for, in fact, the word signifies both bodily life, and the immortal soul; and that it here means the higher life of man, that is, the *soul*, is so manifest from the scope of the argument, that one may be greatly surprised that any should have chosen to render it otherwise, and to argue that our Lord speaks primarily, at least, if not exclusively, of the loss of animal *life*. It is very true that a man would be nothing profited, were he to gain the whole world and lose his life; but had this been our Lord's proposition it would have been an argument to enforce upon the disciples an extreme carefulness about the preservation of their lives, rather than a noble readiness to lay them down for the sake of the truth, which it was the intention of Christ to inculcate. But as our Lord had said, in the preceding verse, "Whosoever will save his life," his bodily life, by a cowardly desertion of my cause, "shall lose it," shall lose his life in a higher sense, namely, his soul; "and whosoever will lose his life," his bodily life, "for my sake, shall find it," shall find an immortal life in a future state; so here he sets the loss of life in this higher sense, that is, the loss of eternal life, or, what is the same thing, the loss of the soul's future happiness, against that worldly gain which might be the inducement to save life at the expense of a good conscience. And most strongly does our Lord thus convey the general and most important truth, that there is nothing earthly, no, not the gain of the whole world, of all its riches, honours, and pleasures, were that possible, which could compensate for the loss of the immortal soul, which consists in its exclusion from eternal life. So entirely ought the safety of the soul to engross our attention and call forth our efforts. Had our word *life*, like the Greek ψυχη, been commonly used, both for the animal life of the body, and for the immortal spirit in men, it would have been allowable to translate, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his LIFE;" but, as the term *life* conveys but one meaning, our translators could not have expressed the true sense otherwise than by translating ψυχη in this verse *soul*. This could not be done in the preceding verse because of the paronomasia; the rhetorical figure employed by our Lord in this and many other of his discourses.

In exchange for his soul.—The word ανταλλαγμα signifies a thing given in exchange, *a ransom;* which also applies directly to the *soul*, as is manifest from the next verse, where the proceedings of the day of final judgment are immediately introduced. A man might in many cases offer such a ransom for his life as would be accepted; and nothing was more common anciently than to redeem life by gifts: but when "the Son of man shall come in his glory, to reward every man according to his works," and the soul of the wretched man who has renounced Christ from the fear or love of the world has been doomed to the loss of eternal life, and to positive punishment, what shall he offer as a ransom? A question which has the force of the strongest negation. There is no ransom then; the only acceptable ransom of souls from the condemnation of death, the sacrifice of Christ, having been neglected or cast away in that period of probation during which it can be pleaded.

Verse 27. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory, &c.*—In the full manifested glory of the Godhead; accompanied by the whole host of holy angels; in strange contrast to his then humble condition, surrounded by a few poor disciples, despised and rejected of men! Thus if our Lord, on the one hand, represses the lingering expectation of the apostles that he would assume an earthly glory, by declaring that it was in the counsel of God that he should suffer and die, on the other he elevates their hopes to the higher final glories of his second advent. That these words relate, not to the setting up of his mediatorial kingdom, as predicted by Daniel, nor, figuratively, to his coming to judge the nation of the Jews, is most evident from what follows: *And then he will reward every man according to his works.* This is

and [i] then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, [k] There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

[i] Psalm lxii, 12; Rom. ii, 6.

[k] Mark ix, 1; Luke ix, 27.

an act, not of *gracious mediation*, but of strict judgment; so that the coming of Christ in the fulness of his glory, as mediator, could not be intended; nor is a *national* judgment a rewarding of *every* or *each* man according to his work; for sinners of widely different degrees of delinquency are involved in the same public calamities, and the comparatively innocent share the penalty equally with the most guilty. Besides, those who apply this to the desolation of Judea by the Romans, which was no doubt a judicial act of Christ in his exalted state, ought to show how the pious and faithful, as well as the wicked, were then rewarded; which is undoubtedly in rendering to "every man according to his works." The passage has clearly no meaning but as it refers to the end of the world, and the general judgment; for then only can those be fully rewarded who have laid down their lives for the sake of Christ, one of the subjects on which he had been discoursing, and which stands intimately connected with these words.

Verse 28. *Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*—That this coming of the Son of man relates to the setting up of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ in its fulness and perfection, is as certain as that the coming of the Son of man in the preceding verse relates to his second advent, as Judge. The parallel passages sufficiently explain the meaning. St. Luke says, "Till they see the kingdom of God;" and St. Mark, "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." "The kingdom of Christ," "the kingdom of God," and "the kingodm of heaven," are all phrases used to express the Gospel dispensation, or Christian economy. It is called a kingdom, because all men are placed under the power of Christ as MEDIATOR, to redeem, govern, and save; and, under his power as LORD, to correct, and, if impenitent, to condemn: and it has this appellation also because the administration of his Gospel, under his authority, was a new species of control introduced into human society, regulating the hearts and conduct of obedient men; attractively influential by its kindness, admonitory by its threats, and, in the case of determined rebellion, terrible in the penalties which it has established. This kingdom our Lord began to found by his personal ministry; but it was not completed till his ascension, when according to the prophecy of Daniel, "the Son of man came to the Ancient of days," "and there was given to him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him;" and then, to give efficiency to the means by which the sons of men should be thus brought into a state of willing, gracious subjection to him as their Lord, he poured out the Holy Spirit, in his plenitude of graces and gifts, upon the disciples at the day of pentecost. This he himself termed enduing them "with power from on high;" which sufficiently explains the words of St. Mark: "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with POWER." To *taste of death* is a Hebrew mode of expression, equivalent to *see death*. It merely signifies *to die*, and is constantly so used by the Jewish writers. "All the children of men taste the taste of death." Thus were the apostles encouraged; for although he had assured them that he must die, yet they were not to die till they had seen his kingdom set up in its power; from which they might also have inferred, had they not been as yet "slow of heart to understand," that even their Master's death was in some manner mysteriously connected with the full establishment of his kingdom. This they afterward understood; they died not till they had witnessed the glorious triumphs of his kingdom over both Jews and Gentiles, the glorious earnest of its universal prevalence throughout the whole world. Those commentators who apply these words to the judicial visitation of the Jewish nation, and the destruction of Jerusalem, adopt an interpretation which is wholly forbidden by the parallel places from Mark and Luke, above referred to; for how that direful event could be the "coming of the kingdom of God with power," is utterly inconceivable, when the established sense of the phrase, "the kingdom of God," as used in the gospels, is considered. For though the infliction of punishment upon the Jewish nation by the exalted and glorified "Lord and Christ," whom they had rejected, be spoken of figuratively, as a "coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," the imagery being taken from the circumstances of the general judgment; yet this is never called "the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom," nor "seeing the kingdom of God." It is true that our Lord says, "There be SOME standing here which shall not taste of death," which has been thought to intimate that the event alluded to was so distant that all but a very few of the disciples must, in the course of nature, be dead before it arrived; and this they state best agrees with the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about forty years afterward. But a better

reason may be found for the use of the word τινες, *some* or *certain persons*. ONE, at least, then present, was to be excluded; ONE was to taste of death before "the glorious resurrection, and ascension, and coming of the Holy Ghost," which the others were to witness. That excepted person was Judas, who "went out and hanged himself." The declaration could not then include all; and it is restricted, accordingly, by an indefinite limitation. The opinion of those is not better founded which refers the text to the transfiguration mentioned in the next chapter. Then, indeed, the Son of man appeared invested with glory; but in no good sense can it be said that he then "came in his kingdom," or that then "the kingdom of God came with power." The glory was great, but transient; and it was so because it was merely symbolical of something future to this illustrious event itself.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *The transfiguration of Christ.* 14 *He healeth the lunatic,* 22 *foretelleth his own passion,* 24 *and payeth tribute.*

1 AND [a] after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

[a] Mark ix, 2; Luke ix, 28.

CHAPTER XVII. Verse 1. *And after six days.*—St. Luke says "about ωσει, eight days," including the day on which the preceding transactions took place, and the day of his ascent to the mountain, ωσει indicating that the time mentioned was not fully completed.

Peter, James, and John.—This James was a son of Zebedee, the same who was afterward slain by Herod; not James the Less, the author of the epistles. John was the beloved disciple, and brother of James. These three disciples were chosen to be witnesses of some of the most remarkable facts in the history of our Lord; and especially of the transfiguration and the agony in the garden; scenes which from their nature demanded privacy, and which yet it was most important to establish by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

A high mountain.—This, by tradition, is said to have been Mount Tabor; but nothing is more uncertain. That it was not far distant from Cesarea Philippi, is probable. It was our Lord's custom, contrary to that of the Jews, generally to select high mountains for prayer. The motive might be to secure greater privacy. This was the evident reason here; for he allowed only three of his disciples to accompany him, designing that the knowledge of the transaction which followed should be deposited solely with them until after his resurrection.

Verse 2. *And was transfigured before them.*—The word signifies a change of form or appearance, which change is immediately described, *his face did shine as the sun*, and *his raiment was white as the light;* or, as Mark and Luke express it, "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering, exceeding white as snow." The light therefore with which he was invested appears to have penetrated his garments themselves, and to have arrayed his whole form with intense and dazzling splendour.

Verse 3. *Moses and Elias.*—St. Luke calls them "two men," because as such they appeared, though they also were arrayed "in glory;" and either from the conversation which they overheard, or from the information of Christ afterward, they knew them to be Moses and Elias. Elijah had been translated into heaven, so that he appeared in his transformed BODY; Moses was a disembodied SPIRIT, yet having a bodily form; for though some have fancied that he was raised from the dead to attend our Lord on this occasion, not the least evidence of this is to be gathered from the history. Why should men attempt to be "wise above what is written?" Lightfoot, Schoettgen, and Wetstein have produced passages out of the rabbinical writings to show that it was an ancient tradition among the Jews that both Moses and Elijah should appear in the time of the Messiah. But if this tradition were as ancient as supposed, it is worthless and vain, and nothing occurred on this occasion to sanction it. By the appearance of Elijah, they did not mean a transient apparition of that prophet, but his fulfilling his office among men, so that there

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 [b] While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard *it* they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their

[b] 2 Peter, chap. i, 17.

was no appearance of either Moses or Elijah here in the sense of their tradition. Nor is the tradition, as far as relates to Moses, so ancient as the time of our Lord. This is evident from verse 10, where the disciples refer to the tradition of the scribes respecting Elias, but say nothing of Moses; and from the opinions before mentioned, that Christ might be "John the Baptist, or Elias, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets," but where also no reference is made to Moses. This, like many other attempts to find illustrations of the New Testament in rabbinical works, fails, among other reasons, from assuming that their authors always, or at least often, express the notions of the more ancient Jews. Passages indeed occur which speak of "the two," Moses and Elias, "coming together in the days of the Messiah;" but these personages were thus probably united after the rabbins had read this account of the transfiguration in the gospels, or had heard it related by Christians. The same rabbins also speak of Elias sometimes appearing to their doctors, conversing with them, and teaching them; designing by this, no doubt, to depreciate the glory of this miracle as to Christ, and the honour which it put upon him as the great Teacher above all the rest.

Verse 3. *Talking with him.*—St. Luke is more particular, and introduces the interesting circumstance, that they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." See note on Luke ix, 31.

Verse 4. *Let us make three tabernacles.*—The three disciples had been asleep while Jesus was engaged in prayer, and when they awoke the scene of the transfiguration commenced, "and they saw his glory, and the two men that were with him;" and though "sore afraid," though an indescribable awe rested upon them, it was yet mingled with so much solemn delight and satisfaction, that Peter wished to form *three tents* for the illustrious personages before him, that they might remain with them, and that they might enjoy the glory and felicity of this unexpected manifestation. This may be fairly interpreted to have been Peter's meaning. As for the opinion of those who state that Peter now thought that his Master was about to assume his proper dignity, and to set up his visible and splendid kingdom, they assign to him ideas more definite than he at the time was capable of forming; for St. Luke says, "He knew not what he said;" he was in a bewildered state of mind, and expressed merely his wish that the persons and the scene should continue. By *tabernacles* are meant tents or booths, such as were made of the boughs of trees at the feast of tabernacles, to keep off heat or cold.

Verse 5. *A bright cloud.*—A shining cloud, a cloud with intensely bright beams shining out of it. This is called by St. Peter, in his second epistle, "the excellent glory;" and is to be distinguished from the glory which beamed from and invested our Lord's person, and from that also in which Moses and Elias "appeared." It was "the glory of the Father," the shechinah, or visible symbol of the Divine presence.

Overshadowed them.—Επισκιαζω signifies to envelope in shade, which seems inconsistent with the descent of a *bright or shining cloud*, and it has therefore been sometimes rendered in the forced sense of *to surround*. No difficulty however exists; for the shechinah was at once dark and bright; a dark cloud which sent forth rays of light: in the wilderness it was dark in one part, light in another; in the holy of holies it was entirely a "thick darkness," except where special breakings forth of light intimated the will of God, and his acceptance of the service rendered to him. With reference to its darkness in the holy place, the Lord is said "to dwell in thick darkness." In the present instance there was a "cloud," a "brightness" issuing from it; then by the dark part of the cloud the whole company was overshadowed, or enveloped with darkness; thereby rendering *the voice out of the cloud*, which immediately followed, the more awful; for *when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.*

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. See note on chap. iii, 17.

Hear ye him.—This is spoken with reference to the presence of Moses and Elias; one the giver of the law, the other representative of the whole order of the prophets. Thus "the law and the prophets" appeared before the disciples, impersonated, as it were, in these venerable visitants; but there was also THE SON, the BELOVED SON, in whom the Fa-

eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

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ther is emphatically WELL PLEASED: and when the disciples were commanded by the awful voice from the cloud to *hear* HIM, it was thus solemnly enjoined upon them to take him for their SUPREME TEACHER. He was declared invested with the authority which now passed away from Moses and the prophets. This was wholly concentrated in Christ; and he had the supreme power to establish, to explain, enlarge, and in many respects entirely to abrogate what was enjoined in the law and enforced by the prophets, under that commission from God which, after a course of ages, was about to close.

Verse 9. *The vision.*—The word ὁραμα, rendered vision, signifies a supernatural representation of any thing to the eyes of men awake; and so stands opposed to a dream, which represents things to the imagination during sleep.

Whatever subordinate ends might be intended by this solemn and glorious event, the transfiguration, it must have had one leading and principal design; nor is this difficult to ascertain. Rightly understood, it must be considered as the solemn inauguration of our Lord in the presence of his three chosen disciples into the office of SUPREME LAWGIVER in the Church of God. This will explain the reason why Moses and Elias, rather than any other of the departed saints, as Abraham, and some inferior prophet to Elias, appeared on the occasion. The whole action, by their introduction, became symbolical; and its meaning was rendered more impressive. Moses and Elias were the two great authorities of the Jewish Church, and they both agreed in giving their authority to the upholding of the whole law of the Jews in its utmost exactness. There was a strong conviction among the disciples, and it became a subject of great future contention in the early Church, that the ceremonial as well as the moral law was to continue in force for ever; and for this, the authority of Moses and the prophets, acknowledged on both sides to be that of Divine inspiration, was pleaded. How could that which God had formally and under great penalties enforced be neglected with impunity? It is plain that nothing but the same authority which enjoined the law of ceremonies could revoke or change them; and that he only who had laid down the modes of acceptable worship under the old covenant could appoint them under the new. That authority was here given by the proclamation of the Father, commanding that the Son should be *heard* or *obeyed*; and as this command was without limitation, it included, necessarily, obedience, in all matters of faith, worship, and practice: *Hear ye* HIM. And the circumstances were suited to the weight and solemnity of the occasion. This supreme authority was, in the presence of Moses and Elias, declared to be in Christ: they appeared there in the character of SERVANTS; he is proclaimed to be the beloved SON; and the same voice, from the same shechinah, which had given to Moses his commission, and declared the statutes and ordinances which he was to enjoin upon the people, and which had appointed Elijah, the champion and restorer of the law, now appoints our Lord to be exclusively heard and obeyed. Thus was the mission of Christ to set up a new and spiritual kingdom, and to appoint its laws and ordinances, though that might imply the abolition of many previous Divine institutions, most unequivocally confirmed. And that this was the view which St. Peter took of it appears from his second epistle. He there shows that the transaction took place in confirmation of the truth of Christ's claims; because he argues from it to show that "they had not followed cunningly devised fables;" and, also, that our Lord on that occasion received from the Father "honour and glory;" which honour and glory was manifestly that of being declared that beloved Son of God whom all were commanded to "HEAR," as their Teacher and Lord. By this voice from heaven he was also pointed out to be that prophet of whom Moses himself had uttered this express prediction, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall HEARKEN," Deut. xviii, 15; words which imply that the Jews should be put under an obligation to hearken to this prophet, and no longer to Moses; and *that* under so great a penalty, that all who refused should be "destroyed from among the people." Thus, as Calvin observes, "we are placed under his tuition alone; and commanded from him alone to seek the doctrine of salvation, to depend upon, and listen to ONE; to adhere to ONE; in a word, as the terms import, to hearken to ONE ONLY." The conclusion of the whole scene, as Bishop Porteus observes, harmonizes with this declaration. Moses and Elias instantly disappear; and "when the disciples lift up their eyes, they see no man, save Jesus only." The former objects of their veneration are no more; Christ remains alone, their unrivalled and undisputed sovereign.

Subordinate to this general design, however, the transfiguration served other and highly important purposes. It would doubtless tend to animate the courage of our Lord

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, [c] Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

14 ¶ [d] And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-

[c] Matt. xi, 14; Mark ix, 11.

[d] Mark ix, 17; Luke ix, 38.

himself to meet his sufferings by the foretaste which he in his human nature was here allowed to enjoy of his future glory. The conversation which Moses and Elias held with him respecting his *death*, teaches us that in this subject the glorified saints felt an eminent interest. That they should thus discourse on his death to encourage him to undergo it, is a most improbable conjecture; he needed no counsel or solace from them; but from his lips they might learn more of the mystery of that event which occupied the attention of the celestial world, more of its manner, and reasons, and effects, than had hitherto been made known even to them; and thus we are reminded that Christ crucified is the grand life-giving theme, both to the saints in heaven, and those on earth, and will indeed continue to be to all eternity. A sensible demonstration was also given, in the real appearance of the two men who had for so many ages ceased to be inhabitants of this world, of the immortality of the soul. The presence of Moses proved, also, that between death and the resurrection from the dead, the disembodied spirit exists in a state of consciousness and vigour; and, as to the righteous, in a state of glory and felicity. Elijah's body had been taken up to heaven; but he also appeared in "glory," by which the great transforming change which shall pass upon the bodies of the righteous, at their resurrection, was declared; of which the transfiguration of Christ himself was an additional emblem; for after his glorious body shall "the vile body" of believers be finally "fashioned." See note on Luke ix, 31.

Verse 10. *That Elias must first come?*—This question appears to have been suggested by what had just occurred. The three disciples had seen Elias, but in glory, and as a transient visitant, and this they knew was not what *the scribes* meant by his coming; but that he should appear publicly, in order to fulfil his prophetic office, before the manifestation of the Messiah. And as they grounded this expectation upon the express words of Malachi, the disciples very naturally felt the difficulty, and applied to Christ to solve it.

Verse 11. *Elias shall first come.*—It is a mistake to suppose that our Lord declares that there should be a coming of Elias subsequent to the time in which he spoke.—The verb indeed is in the present tense: "Elias first cometh:" and though it is said that the present is used for the future, to accord with the verb in the next clause, yet there is as much reason to assume that there the future is used for the present. The fact is, that our Lord here speaks only by *concession;* he allows that the interpretation of the scribes was just, that Elias should come before the Messiah, "and restore all things;" but then he immediately adds *that Elias is come already;* and that the Elias spoken of by the Prophet Malachi was John the Baptist, and not Elijah the Tishbite.

And restore all things.—The word αποκαθιστημι has two significations, to *restore* and to *complete*. It is here to be taken in the latter sense: "Elias truly shall first come, and shall complete all things;" that is, all things predicted of him by the prophets. Thus John the Baptist became the herald of Messiah; he prepared the way for the Lord; he preached repentance and reformation, with great effect, and completed the succession of Divine dispensations which were to precede that of Messiah. "*And shall* RESTORE all things," as Campbell well observes, "is, to say the least, a very indefinite expression. This remark must be extended to the verbal noun αποκαταστασις, which when similarly circumstanced ought to be rendered *completion*, or *accomplishment*, not restoration, or restitution, as in Acts iii, 21." Our translators have followed the Vulgate; but the Syriac and Persic versions have the clause, "and shall complete all things."

Verse 12. *And they knew him not.*—That is, they did not acknowledge him as the Elias of prophecy, or as the herald of Messiah.

Verse 14. *Kneeling down to him.*—That is, he fell down at his knees, embracing them, a peculiarly earnest mode of supplication, mentioned both by Homer and Virgil. The word is γονυπετων, and this *advolutio ad genua*, as Grotius has shown, is to be distinguished from *in genua procumbens*, or kneeling.

Verse 15. *He is a lunatic.*—Σεληνιαζεται,

times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto

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he is *moon-struck*, not insane, but epileptic, which disease was thought to be greatly influenced by the moon as well as madness.—The primary cause of this malady was, however, demoniacal possession.

Verse 16. *I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him, &c.*—The disciples here were the nine apostles, whom Jesus had left behind when he took Peter, James, and John up into the mount. It appears from the other evangelists that the scribes had, during the absence of Christ, joined themselves to the disciples, and were disputing with them when he rejoined them; and that in the meantime the father of this afflicted child, finding their Master absent, had made application to the disciples to cure him, and they were not able; which was probably a matter of malignant exultation to the scribes who were present. Whether they attempted it and failed, or were afraid to make the attempt, does not appear; probably the latter. A difficulty here arises which has not always been satisfactorily solved. "Why," it may be asked, "since Christ had given power to the twelve to cast out unclean spirits, and they had formerly found the devils 'subject to them through the name of Christ,' could they not cast out this demon, and restore the child?" The true answer appears to be, that that fulness of miraculous power with which they were before invested had reference to the special mission on which they were sent; and when that was terminated, although they were not deprived of it, yet the case before them being one of a very formidable description, the youth being grievously torn and tormented, that specific act of faith which appears to have been required in every particular case here failed them; and that probably because during the absence of Christ they had not been engaged, like him and the three apostles with him, in special acts of fasting and prayer.

Verse 17. *O faithless and perverse generation, &c.*—If this reproof were addressed to the disciples, the terms of it must be taken in a milder and more limited sense than that in which they are employed by our Lord when he reproves the Jews at large: but still, in the mildest sense, it would imply that the disciples had not, during Christ's absence, been giving themselves up to prayer; and that their faith had become languid; nay, that a degree of positive unbelief as to being able, even in the name of their Master, to cure so desperate a case as that before them, had invaded their minds; for with "unbelief" they are charged, verse 20. But, without supposing the disciples blameless, or not to be comprehended in the general rebuke in the degree in which it was applicable to them, it is reasonably supposed by most interpreters that the reproof was addressed to all present, and especially to the scribes, who had probably mocked at the inability of the disciples to effect a cure in the name of their Master; although they themselves had seen or heard of innumerable instances of his power over both natural diseases and those which were supernaturally inflicted. An occasion was thus afforded them for the discovery of their utter *faithlessness and perversity of mind;* and these ill qualities had been strongly manifested by the manner in which they laid hold upon it to detract from the power of Christ's name. Thus they were the more fully unmasked and reproved; while the illustrious display of Christ's power which followed, confounded and humbled them before the people. For the evil spirit was permitted to put forth all his power when the youth was brought to Christ: "Straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming;" and when the devil was commanded to come out, he "cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and the child was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose," Mark ix, 26, &c. Thus every thing was permitted to manifest the more strikingly the fierceness and obstinacy of the possession, and the saving might of Christ, and the more forcibly to abash the gainsaying scribes, whose exultation, like that of "the hypocrite, was but for a moment."

Verse 20. *Your unbelief.*—Your want of entire RELIANCE on my almighty power, and on my absolute faithfulness.

A grain of mustard seed.—Which, as before said, is the smallest of seeds growing into a tree, and therefore, among the Jews, furnished a common proverb to express a small quantity of any thing. This faith is usually called by divines "the faith of mira-

you, [e] If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

22 ¶ [f] And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

[e] Luke xvii, 6.

[f] Matt. xx, 17; Mark ix, 31; Luke ix, 44.

cles;" and has been said to be a supernatural persuasion given to a man, that God will effect some particular supernatural work by him, in that very moment. In the present age, so far removed from those times when those supernatural gifts were imparted, the subject is necessarily obscure, and was perhaps left without farther explanation because of the intended temporary duration of miraculous powers. That a faith without charity might exist which should remove mountains, that is, effect things really impossible to mere human power, and which therefore commanded an adequate exertion of the Divine energy to produce the result, we learn from St. Paul, who appears to have had this text in his thoughts from his reference to the removing of "mountains." But this faith, though it might not be saving to the individual, differed from saving faith only as it was directed to a different object. Faith, in both cases, does not mean mere credence given to some truth proposed; but *trust* or *reliance*. Faith is saving when it is the trust of a heart broken and contrite on account of sin, in the great atonement, which is the only object of saving faith; so the faith by which miracles were wrought by the disciples of Christ, was also trust or reliance, but its object was the *name* or *power* of Christ, and this undoubtedly some persons appear to have possessed who had not the faith which placed them in a state of salvation. The majority of those who were endued with miraculous powers were no doubt pious persons, but they were bestowed upon some who, though not wholly without incipient signs of grace, never gave themselves up fully to the sanctifying influence of Christ's religion; and they remained with others after much spiritual declension, as not being necessarily connected with the state of the heart, or of that faith, the actings of which, being directed to Christ as the SAVIOUR, draw life and salvation from him. It is thus that the distinction may be clearly made between the faith which saves, and the faith which wrought miracles; and it appears to have been sufficiently well understood in apostolic times that the possession of the latter was not in itself a sufficient indication of Christian character, and that the effect which followed put no honour upon the individual who was the human instrument of the miracles; but only upon Christ, in whose sole *name* they were openly wrought, and so gave confirmation, not to any private professed object, not to any private tenet of the worker of such miracles himself, but to the Divine character and heavenly doctrine of Christ alone. With respect to the degree of this faith, our Lord states that if so small as to be compared to a grain of mustard seed, it should remove "a mountain;" that is, speaking in a hyperbolical proverb, it should effect an apparently impossible thing. But here it is to be remembered that the very essence of this faith is exclusive *trust* in the power of Christ, and as such, in all its degrees from the least, it must be *entire trust*. Faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, excludes *doubt*, which, as in the case of the disciples just reproved, implied an "unbelief," απιστια, a deficiency at least of faith, which rendered them unable to relieve the case in question.

And nothing shall be impossible to you.—Nothing necessary to give testimony to the doctrine you are commissioned to teach, to afford you greater facilities for promoting the salvation of men; and to illustrate the mercy and charity of your religion. The promise was limited by the nature of the case, and the commission they had received. "It is not faith," says Mr. Baxter, "but presumption, which had no promise of success, if they or any are confident of working any miracle which Christ never commissioned or called them to work, or promised his blessing to."

Verse 21. *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*—Our Lord does not here probably mean that different kinds of demons inflict different species of diseases, and that because of a difference of a *kind*, they are more easy or more difficult to expel; but that when a possession by any demon took place, which, as in this instance, presented very fearful signs of rage and torment, even an ordinary faith would give way to doubt, under the impression of the difficulty of the case, unless supported and invigorated by that spiritual habit of mind which is nourished by special and frequent acts of fasting and earnest prayer. It does not therefore follow from this, as some have supposed, that the disciples had cast out any devils without fasting and prayer, for these were the habits of all pious Jews; but that it required a more than ordinary attention to these duties to maintain that loftiness of faith which should not give place under the impressions naturally made upon the mind by the more formidable displays of Satanic agency. This verse is want-

23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received * tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast

* Called in the original, *didrachma*, being in value fifteen pence.

ing in the Vatican and a few other MSS. and versions, but is contained in others of great authority; and all have it in Mark ix, 29: so that of its genuineness, as a part of holy writ, there can be no doubt.

Verse 22. *And while they abode in Galilee.*—Αναστρεφομενων must here be translated, *passed through*, for they were on their way back through Galilee to Capernaum.

Betrayed.—Delivered up; the word not signifying treachery; προδιδοναι is to betray.

Verse 23. *And they were exceeding sorry.*—They did not as yet comprehend the connection of our Lord's death with his glory, and the establishment of his kingdom; and as for his resurrection from the dead, St. Mark says they "questioned with one another what the rising from the dead should mean;" probably, how it should be necessary for him to die if he was so soon to return to life again; and why he could not as well establish his kingdom now he was still alive, without being brought to life again, or whether he spoke figuratively only on this subject. Great was the obscurity of their minds; but it is to be remembered that our Lord simply stated that he should die and rise again, without entering into any explanation of the reasons.

They that received tribute money.—Οι τα διδραχμα λαμβανοντες, those that collected *the didrachmas*, one being paid by each individual. The Attic drachma was the fourth part of a shekel, and the didrachma half a shekel, which sum was paid annually for the service of the temple, by every Israelite excepting women, children, and servants, and that throughout the world. The value of the half shekel was about fifteen pence of our money. This temple tribute was voluntary, though still expected of every one; and is not to be confounded with the Roman tribute or poll tax, which was paid in Roman money, and was of course, as laid upon a conquered people, compulsory. The persons collecting the temple tribute were not publicans or the receivers of the civil taxes, but the servants of the temple, the αποστολοι, sent out by the priests for that purpose.

Doth not your Master pay tribute?—Τα διδραχμα the didrachma; that is, the half shekel contribution? The question is sufficiently in proof that this was not a Roman tax, for which a *demand* would have been made without any such inquiry. But as this was voluntary, although but seldom refused, the peculiarity of our Lord's character and conduct would naturally suggest the inquiry to the collectors. Some have thought this tribute of the half shekel *obligatory*, because it was enjoined by Moses, Exod. xxx, 12–16, but this was not a perpetual law; and the tribute was not even then to be paid yearly, but upon numbering the people. It fell into disuse before the times of the kings, and after the captivity was resorted to only as a custom, without any pretence of legal enforcement.

Verse 25. *He saith, Yes.*—As not being willing for a moment to have it supposed that his master was indifferent to the maintenance of the temple service, or perhaps knowing that he had previously paid it.—But Jesus coming in at the time *prevented him*, προεφθασεν αυτον, *anticipated him*, by taking up the subject himself.

Verse 26. *Then are the children free.*—The force of this argument is wholly grounded upon Christ being THE DIVINE SON OF GOD. The tribute money being paid for the service of God in his temple, was considered as paid to God; it was therefore God's tribute.—But, says our Lord, "*Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own sons, or of strangers?*" That is, their subjects, not being children, or, as it may be rendered, *of others*. Peter saith, "*Of others.*" Jesus answered, "*Then are the sons free.*" Our Lord leaves the irresistible inference to be drawn,—Then, if this tribute be levied in the name of my FATHER, I, his SON, am exempted.

Verse 27. *Offend them.*—Lest we should place a stumbling block in their way, create a prejudice against us, as though I disregard the temple and its service, and teach you also to slight it, I waive insisting upon my right of exemption as the Son of God, and the Lord of the temple itself.

That first cometh up.—That is, to the hook

a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find * a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

* Or, *a stater*. It is half an ounce of silver, in value two shillings sixpence; after five shillings the ounce.

A piece of money.—Στατηρα, *a stater*. A piece of money of the value of a shekel, therefore equivalent to two didrachmas, one to discharge his own tribute, and the other that of Peter. Thus, while our Lord showed so great humility in not standing upon his dignity as the Son of God, he demonstrated the truth of this high relation, which implied Divinity itself, by the miracle he wrought. Whether the coin were created for the purpose, or the fish had swallowed it by accident, makes little difference. The first supposes omnipotence; for to create any thing, however small, is the work only of God: and if we adopt the second opinion, then the depths of ocean must have been open to his all-pervading eye; and his power must have wrought there, directing the very fish to the hook of Peter, which contained the required coin. The narrative shows that our Lord himself was so destitute of money that his disciples could not have followed him from pecuniary motives; and though he could have commanded boundless wealth by miracle, as well as a single *stater*, he submitted to voluntary poverty!

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Christ warneth his disciples to be humble and harmless:* 7 *to avoid offences, and not to despise the little ones:* 15 *teacheth how we are to deal with our brethren when they offend us:* 21 *and how oft to forgive them:* 23 *which he setteth forth by a parable of the king that took account of his servants,* 32 *and punished him who showed no mercy to his fellow.*

1 At [a] the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

[a] Mark ix. 33; Luke ix, 46.

CHAPTER XVIII. Verse 1. *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus.*—After the tribute money had been paid, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, the other disciples joined our Lord and Peter.

Saying, Who is the greatest, &c.—Not *saying* to Christ, as putting the question to him, for St. Mark says that "he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? but they held their peace;" and then, as St. Luke states, "Jesus, perceiving the thought of their hearts, took a child, &c.;" and, by his discourse accompanying this action, at once showed them that he knew the subject of their late dispute, and how to adapt his instructions in the most impressive manner, to correct their errors. When, therefore, St. Matthew says, that they came to Jesus *saying*, λεγοντες, he means disputing among themselves, in the way of friendly but earnest debate, which they carried on until they entered the house at Capernaum where Jesus was, when they became silent, as being afraid lest he should know that they had been agitating a subject which might subject them to his reproof. This easily reconciles the apparent discrepancy between St. Matthew and St. Luke in relating this incident; and in support of this use of λεγοντες Whitby very, satisfactorily adduces Matt. viii, 27, "The men wondered, λεγοντες, saying among themselves, What manner of person is this?" Matt. ix, 33: "The multitude wondered, λεγοντες, saying among themselves." "Then came to him the Sadducees, οι λεγοντες, those who say there is no resurrection." The sense of St. Matthew, says Markland, appears to be this: "At that time the disciples, disputing (among themselves) which of them should be greater than the other in the kingdom of heaven, came to Jesus." They were gradually obtaining suitable notions of the spiritual purposes for which Christ was manifested; but still, connected with these, they expected a visible administration of power and glory, and a carnal ambition had mingled itself with their better feelings. With what honesty do these historians lay open their own dulness of apprehension and moral defects, a circumstance which stamps their writings with the strongest credibility! They took it for granted that whatever "the kingdom" might be, some one of them should be greatest in it, and each would have his claims; one might urge his having become a disciple before the rest, another his relationship to our Lord by blood, and a third some circumstance of distinguishing regard which he had already received. This, however, is evident from the dispute, that none

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, [b] Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[b] Matt. xix, 14; 1 Cor. xiv, 20.

of them considered the supremacy of St. Peter as determined by the previous promise of the "keys;" and that they each thought he was equally eligible to be appointed by Christ *first* in his kingdom. They at least did not understand that our Lord had already made Peter "the prince of the apostles."

Verse 2. *And set him in the midst.*—That all might see; and that thus the lesson taught by this symbolical action might be impressed upon all. Of this mode of teaching by expressive actions, several examples occur in the history of the prophets.

Verse 3. *Except ye be converted, &c.*—They had been disputing who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, being assured that they should all enter into it, whenever Christ should set it up, and that all should be of great consideration in it; but it never entered into their thoughts that there was any danger lest they should not enter it at all. Yet these words of our Lord suggest this to them. "The question with you," as though he had said, "ought to be, not which of you shall be greatest in my kingdom; but whether you are in a state of mind to receive its benefits." And when he declares that they must undergo a *conversion* before they could become its subjects, he declares them as yet unfit for its blessings. Nothing could serve to impress them more strongly with the exclusive spirituality of that kingdom which he was about to establish, than making a childlike character the essential qualification for entering it. Civil offices would require *skill;* the government of men *energy* and decision of character; the overthrow of the Roman legions, in order to deliver their country from a foreign yoke, *courage;* but Christ requires that they should become *little children!* From this alone they might most certainly conclude that, notwithstanding some better and more hallowed views, they had been under the influence of the most erroneous conceptions of the nature of the kingdom of Messiah. These errors our Lord traces to the state of their hearts, and declares to them, *Except ye be converted*, that is, wholly changed in disposition, *and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Copious parallels have been sometimes formed between the character of little children and true disciples, and, as usual in such cases, a fertile invention has pushed interpreters beyond the warrant of the text. Our Lord himself explains his own meaning in the next verse, "*Whosoever therefore shall* HUMBLE *himself* as this little child." In what then does the humility of a little child consist, but in freedom from ambition, and the desire of wealth and honours? The strifes of men for objects of this kind pass unheeded by the child, and kindle in his bosom no corresponding feelings: he is dead to them. This, in a child, arises not from moral principle, but from immature capacity; but in a disciple, it can only spring from renewed nature; and minds naturally aspiring and prone to earthly cupidity cannot be freed from such evils, without being at the same time debarred from the dominion of all others. *Humility*, therefore, as our Lord intended we should understand it, is the root of all the graces:—when self is utterly removed; when things spiritual become the supreme objects of interest and desire; when others are preferred to ourselves; when we gladly embrace the inferior offices which may be assigned us by our Lord, and tremble at the responsibility of the highest; when we are ready to endure suffering, and to submit to lowly circumstances; and are not puffed up, and despise others, if placed in higher; and, finally, when we live under an entire sense of our dependence upon God for strength and grace, and maintain an habitual consciousness of our own insufficiency, then shall we be ranked with *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* This is the true and only greatness which our Lord proposes to his disciples; and these qualities he urges upon them as the only means of obtaining distinction in his Church, which distinction was to be not so much one of rank and office, as of that meek and lowly character of which he himself, the Head and Lord, was so eminent an example. It may be here observed that though such a conversion as is here spoken of is represented as a necessary qualification for receiving the spiritual kingdom of Christ on earth, its necessity is still more strongly marked as a preparation for the felicity of a future state. The piety of a Jew might be very imperfect, yet, if sincere, he might receive the Gospel, as the disciples did, who, till the day of pentecost, remained in a defective state of spirituality, though they had been gradually advancing in it; but the conversation must be complete, and every root and principle of the worldly spirit be extirpated from the heart, before any one can enter "the kingdom of heaven," in the highest and ultimate sense of that expressive phrase. There the reign of God over the whole soul, in all its faculties, motives, and tendencies, must be perfect, in order that man may receive that fulness of felicity and glory, which can only result from that sub-

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 [c] But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 ¶ Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that

[c] Mark ix, 42; Luke xvii, 1, 2.

jection to the infinitely wise and holy and gracious law of God, which a perfect love, breathing a spirit of perfect freedom, can alone produce. No selfish, no ostentatious, no ambitious, no irascible passion can enter there. And for this our entire and absolute conversion from all the evils of our fallen nature the Gospel was introduced, and the Holy Spirit is still given to those who seek that heavenly gift from God.

Verse 5. *One such little child.*—Here the discourse of our Lord turns from the child he had set in the midst as an emblem to the true disciples; *one such little child*, or as the Syriac version renders it, "one that is as this child." Whoso shall receive such a one, however meek and lowly, and unpretending, (qualities which the world is so prone to ridicule and despise,) as his instructer in sacred things, showing to him honour and affection, for the sake of Christ, in whose *name* he comes, *receiveth me.*—Christ will go with his servants, and give himself, in the fulness of his grace and salvation, to those who receive them. This great promise still applies to those who duly estimate the writings of the apostles. They come to us still, in their office and ministry, in the simplicity and unassuming character of their histories and epistles, without the artifices of human eloquence, or the pretence of philosophy; and whosoever receives them as writers, in the name of Christ, for the truth of their testimony respecting him, out of love to the truth of which they are still the honoured messengers, receives Christ himself, who will make his Gospel so taught by them "the power of God unto salvation."—The promise will also hold good as to the affectionate reception of every true minister, though of the ordinary rank, and not qualified by supernatural endowments as were the apostles. If he is so received for the sake of the truth he brings, Christ will come with his servant, and impart his spiritual presence to all who listen to the words which he speaks in his name, and cordially embrace them.

Verse 6. *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones.*—The addition of the words, *which believe in me*, shows that Christ is not speaking of *little ones in age*, but disciples of an humble spirit. To *offend*, to put a σκανδαλον, or stumbling block, in the way of any one, is to cause him to halt in his duty, or to put difficulties in the way of duty, or, in a still stronger sense, to cause any one to fall off from the faith; all which might be done by reproaches, calumnies, insults, and persecutions.

A millstone.—Some think this is the stone of a mill turned by an ass, which was of a larger size than those commonly used, and turned by hand; the corn necessary for the use of the family being in Palestine ground every morning, chiefly by women. The μυλος ονικος was, however, probably only the common upper millstone, called ονικος, because it had the burden of the work, being kept in motion while the lower stone remained fixed. Hence Hesychius explains ονος by ανωτερος λιθος του μυλου, *the upper stone of the mill.*

Drowned in the depth of the sea.—Drowning was not a Jewish punishment, but was practised in other eastern countries. It afforded a fit and striking metaphor for final and utter destruction. As there was no chance left to a man to escape from drowning who was plunged into the deep sea with a millstone around his neck, so the case of revilers, seducers, and persecutors is thus represented as wholly hopeless. Malignant opposition to the truth is punished with the highest severity; this seems one of the most certain rules of the Divine administration, and has the attestation of most extraordinary facts.

Verse 7. *Wo to the world, &c.*—That is, the world by its resistance to the truth, and by its corruption of it, as also by the persecutions it will wage against the preachers and professors of it, discouraging their efforts, and obstructing their success, will bring innumerable evils upon itself, and that both in the way of natural consequence, and by provoking penal inflictions. *Offences* are here again *stumbling blocks.* But, in interpreting these, commentators have often thrown much obscurity over the passage, by understanding the sin alluded to, to be the causing a "weak brother" to stumble or fall. There is, however, no mention of weak brethren, or any allusion to them. The *little ones* were the true servants and apostles of our Lord, who are called *little*, neither in regard of age nor weakness, but because of the graces of humility and deadness to the world conspicuous in them. The word *offences* is also often taken in too narrow

offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 [d] Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always

[d] Matt. v, 30; Mark ix, 45.

a sense; for it includes not only what may occasion a person to fall into error or sin, or what may prejudice him against truth, but every thing which hinders or creates difficulty, or turns aside from a direct course, as stones or blocks placed in the way of a traveller. Here the stumbling blocks come from *the world*, and must be taken to signify every thing that hinders and obstructs good men, and especially ministers, in their duty, particularly that of diffusing the truth, and of turning weak and timid persons from it through subtlety, persecution, or any other means. And the history of the world is a solemn commentary upon the truth of our Lord's words. Because of opposition to the truth, obstructing the success of its preachers, and discouraging those who might have embraced it, utter destruction was brought upon the Jewish state and nation about forty years afterward. The same opposition to the truth and its faithful teachers, and the perversion of men by subtle errors, plunged Christendom for ages into a superstition, idolatry, and darkness, from which it has yet but very partially recovered; and by these, during that period, the greatest evils have been inflicted upon the political and moral condition of society. From the seductions of false teachers errors of the most fatal kind have overspread the Church; by persecutions that truth has been banished which would have detected and refuted them; by the false systems of religion which have in consequence grown up, the souls of countless numbers of men have been put to hazard; and the consequent uncorrected evils of society have induced social distractions and miseries, and awakened in successive ages the just but desolating judgments of almighty God. On all these scenes our Lord's eye was fixed when he uttered these memorable words, which, whether considered as a denunciation or as a prophecy, have been awfully accomplished. Wo, indeed, has been to the world from *offences*.

It must needs be.—From the desperate enmity of the carnal mind to truth and godliness.

To that man.—To every man who either originates, or aids and abets, the putting of stumbling blocks, hinderances, and obstructions before the servants of Christ; and either discourages them, and causes them to fail in their faithfulness, or frustrates the success of their holy labours.

Verse 8. *Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, &c*—Some critics profess not to be able to discover the connection of these words with the foregoing; but all difficulty is removed by considering them as an address to those who would seduce Christ's servants from their duty, or obstruct them in it; and it is here worthy of particular remark, that our Lord traces these evil attempts to their true source, the love of sin in those that hate and oppose the truth.—*The hand, the foot, the eye*, (see note on chap. v, 29, 30,) signify those sins of honour, interest, or pleasure, which men are so prone to spare, and in many instances so resolute not to renounce; and because truth, faithfully preached and urged upon them, must necessarily expose these evils and reprove them, their enmity to it is excited, and so either by subtlety they endeavour to render its teachers unfaithful, or by violence to silence them. Thus their love of honour, wealth, and indulgence, are offences or stumbling blocks to themselves, as being occasions of sin, and especially the sin of putting stumbling blocks, seductions, or difficulties and dangers in the way of the servants of Christ. Now to all such persons these words of Christ are addressed, and they are urged by the *wo* just pronounced against those by whom "offences come," to renounce every thing, though it should be as a part of themselves, a hand or foot, and though it may minister ever so effectually to their honour, interest, or pleasure, rather than be the cause of those offences against the truth and cause of Christ, of which he had so solemnly warned them. These words, therefore, though also found in the sermon on the mount, have not by any error of transcribers been repeated here; but were adduced on a distinct occasion, and with reference to a different class of persons, to whom the address is continued in the next verse.

Verse 10. *That ye despise not, &c.*—Religious enmity and bigotry always produce a contempt of the faithful disciples of Christ, and that in proportion to their zeal and piety. Here, however, to *despise* seems to

behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 [e] For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

[e] St. Luke, chap. xix, 10.

signify to undervalue and think lightly of them, in ignorance or in forgetfulness of the high relation they stand to God, and to the heavenly world. *For I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.* In other words, These are the persons whom God so regards that he will finally place them in his immediate presence, and confer upon them eternal felicity and glory. That this is the sense of the passage, may be established by a few observations. 1. Those who think that our Lord accommodates his language here to the Jewish notion that every individual has a guardian angel, and merely means by it that the disciples were the objects of the special care of Providence, ought to show that it was his practice to make use of language taken from Jewish superstitions to express the truths he was teaching. Of this we have no other instance; and there is no ground, therefore, for supposing that in this place he adopts so circuitous a mode of speech, and one which, if the Jewish notion of guardian angels were not true, could only have misled his hearers. 2. If the doctrine of guardian angels were in fact found in holy Scripture, which, in the sense of one having the charge of each individual, may be confidently denied, yet the text cannot refer to that doctrine; because the angels here mentioned are said to be *in heaven*, beholding the face of their Father, and that *always*. How then does this express the discharge of their office as guardians, which supposes them to be upon earth? 3. The passage cannot refer to the angels in general. It is indeed an express and important doctrine of Scripture, that there is a general ministry of angels exerted in behalf of the "heirs of salvation," though not by assigning each believer to the care of a particular angel, which is a rabbinical figment. But that this general ministry of celestial spirits to the saints cannot be here meant, will follow from the reason just given, that the angels here spoken of are represented as *in heaven*, beholding the face of God, and not as ministering upon earth. 4. If it be said that to behold the face of God imports not their being *always* in his presence, (which, however, is contrary to the letter of the text,) but their being entitled to approach it, and that thus it marks the exalted dignity of those angels that minister to the disciples; it may be replied that this privilege of beholding God belongs to all the angels, or only to a part of them. If those who think the text speaks of angels confine it to a part of them, to the exclusion of the rest, then they assume what is contrary to other scriptures, which represent them all as standing before God, beholding his glory, and waiting his commands. "I saw the Lord," says the prophet, "sitting upon his throne, and ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN standing by him on his right hand, and on his left." But if this same privilege of beholding the face of God be common to all the angels, it cannot be a mark of the dignity of those who are supposed to be here spoken of as ministering to the disciples. 5. Others have taken the words more vaguely and generally, as simply importing that though the angels of God are in so exalted a state as to behold the face of God, and to enjoy access to his immediate presence, yet they disdain not to care for the persons and interests of the humblest believer. This is a consolatory and interesting truth; but whoever attentively considers the words will see that if this were their meaning, the mode of expression is exceedingly obscure, and far removed from that clearness and simplicity which characterize our Lord's teaching, except when he evidently designed, for some important purpose, to involve the truth for a time in parable, which cannot here be urged. His words are, *For I say unto you, that in heaven their angels*, the angels of the disciples, *do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;* which convey certainly no intimation of the ministration of angels at all. 6. The term *angels* must therefore be taken, not for that order of celestial beings usually designated by it, but for the DISEMBODIED SPIRITS of the disciples themselves; and that this was a mode of expression in common use among the Jews of that age is strongly corroborated from Acts xii, 15. Here it is related that Peter, being miraculously delivered out of prison, came knocking at the door of the house of Mary, the mother of Mark; that the damsel Rhoda knew his voice, but opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in to announce that Peter was at the gate; and that she strongly affirming it, in opposition to the incredulity of the disciples who were assembled for prayer in the house, they at length replied, believing certainly that he was still in prison, "*It is his* ANGEL." Now that they could mean any thing by the term *angel*, except Peter's *spirit*, is incredible; for his voice, and his own affirmation to the damsel, (for what should he say to her but that he was Peter, and sought admittance?) assured the damsel that Peter was at the gate; and the disciples, at length yielding to her testimony, and doubting not but that his body was fast held in prison, being

12 [f] How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

[f] St. Luke, chap. xv, 4.

as yet ignorant of his miraculous deliverance, could only conclude that it was his *spirit*. As for the notion of some of the rabbins that guardian angels sometimes assumed the appearance of the person they had in charge, it cannot be proved to have been received generally even among the rabbins themselves, nor to be as ancient as the time of Peter; or even if so, as such dreams were all drawn from the oriental philosophy with which many of them were infected, they were confined to speculative men, and did not influence the popular belief. We have here then an easy interpretation of the text, and one which we shall see perfectly harmonizes with what follows. The argument against *despising* Christ's disciples is placed upon this ground, that they are so the objects of God's regard, that he will raise them into his immediate presence, and crown them with immortal life; and this argument our Lord expresses in this most striking manner: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven," that is, in a future state, "their angels," their spirits, "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" they are admitted even to the beatific vision of God.

Verses 11–14. *For the Son of man is come to save, &c.*—In these verses this interesting argument is still pursued in the same train, but with new illustrations. Our Lord had warned those who might be induced to reproach and persecute his true disciples, that they were not to be *despised* with impunity, because they were the special objects of the love of God, who would, in proof of it, raise them to a state of future felicity and honour in heaven. He now speaks of his own love to them as *the Son of man*, the Messiah whom they were following as disciples, and thus professing their faith in him. I, the Son of man, came *to save that which was lost;* and having saved those who now follow me, having rescued them from their lost condition, they are specially dear to me; just as the shepherd has peculiar joy over the sheep he has found and restored to the flock. This forms the point of the beautiful parable which follows:—*And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep*, on its account, *than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so*, for this is the general inference, *so therefore* it follows from the Father's own love, and from my mission into the world rendered successful as to them in saving that which was lost. it is not his will *that one of these little ones should perish;* which negative form expresses his firm and unchangeable will, that they all should be glorified with himself in eternal felicity. Infinitely stronger, therefore, is this argument against despising, and obstructing, and persecuting the disciples and ministers of Christ, than any which could arise from the circumstance of angels ministering to them. It is grounded upon the love of the Father; the advent of Christ into the world to save them; his rejoicing over them as the fruit of all his humiliations and sufferings; the intention of God to preserve them from perishing, and to bring them, even immediately after death, to behold his face in heaven, and to remain in his beatifying presence for ever. And if these considerations make a *despising* of his true disciples, as such, a despising of Christ, as he himself declares, and ought to operate as a salutary admonition to all, lest they should treat them with contempt or hostility; so they are powerful motives to urge mutual love upon Christians, since they are so loved by their common Father, so rejoiced over by their common Saviour, and since the time is hastening when they shall all together "in heaven behold the face of their Father which is in heaven."

On the parable itself, it may be observed that those who have found certain mysteries in the numbers *ninety-nine* and *one* have been unacquainted with the Jewish modes of speaking, in which, in parabolical illustrations, such numbers are frequently used. Thus the rabbins: "If *ninety-nine* die by an evil eye, and but *one* by the hand of Heaven," &c. "Although *ninety-nine* say, Scatter them, and only *one*, Divide them," &c. In parables, as before observed, we are to regard chiefly the leading point to be illustrated, and not to suppose that the subordinate parts have an equal fulness of meaning. Frequently, indeed, they are merely introduced to fill up the picture, or to complete the narrative. Whether the ninety and nine sheep left be any thing more than this, may be doubted; if, however, it is a significant part of the parable, it must be interpreted of the angelic inhabitants of heaven. They were those whom the great Shepherd left safe in the fold when he came into our world to "seek and to save that which was lost."

15 ¶ Moreover, [s] if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee, then*

[s] Lev. xix, 17; Luke xvii, 3.

It may be farther remarked that, although in the foregoing discourse of our Lord, occasioned by his setting a little child in the midst, he makes use of the child as an emblem of the *humility* of his real disciples, and then breaks off to speak of the disciples themselves frequently as *little ones*, not of children; yet is it most reasonable to conclude that, as the humility of a little child is included in the parallel with which he commences, so there is some respect to children of tender age throughout the whole discourse, and that its bearing is much in favour of infant salvation. We may, then, with respect to them, be instructed that their "angels," the disembodied spirits of children dying before the age in which they are capable of actual sin, do behold the face of God in heaven, and have a place among the blessed; that the great Shepherd came to save them; and that it "is not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish." That infants will be saved, rests upon stronger grounds than this discourse, may be allowed, even upon that declaration of our Lord, *For of such is the kingdom of heaven;* but as this is unquestionably the doctrine of the whole New Testament, which condemns none but those who wilfully reject salvation, of which infants are not capable, so it is pleasing to mark how many of the kind declarations of our Lord in this discourse glance, as it were, from the disciples themselves, of whose interest in his own and his Father's love he is speaking, upon the little child yet standing in the midst, whom he had made their emblem, and who stood there as the representative of little children in general.

Verse 15. *Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass, &c.*—Here an entirely new subject commences; and probably it was entered upon after some interval. Those who trace a connection between it and the foregoing discourse, say that our Lord here turns from the offended to the offending party, pointing out the means of reclaiming him. But they do not observe the difference of terms. The person here spoken of is not an enemy who puts stumbling blocks before the disciples of Christ, and despises them, but a brother who trespasses, *αμαρτανω, sins*, against a brother; a sufficient proof that this is not a continuation of the last subject introduced. The manner here prescribed of treating the injuries we may suffer from each other in word or deed, is the opposite of that which men generally resort to, and yet would prove most effectual to remedy such evils in the first instance, and wholly prevent them from producing strife, uncharitableness, and malice. The whole compass of pagan ethics furnishes no rule at once so manly, so benevolent, so wise, so practical. *Tell him his fault between thee and him alone;* publish it not first to others; lay the case open to him before he is exasperated by being made the subject of public reproach; do it *alone*, without any witnesses, that he may be under no temptation from his pride to become obstinate; do it with reference to *gaining thy brother*, recovering him to the path of duty, and preventing the loss of his soul. This necessarily supposes calmness and kindness in the manner of convincing the offender of his error, and expostulating with him: and in how many cases would this rational, honest, and truly fraternal method of proceeding succeed! and how greatly is it to be preferred to a clamorous proclaiming of our injuries before we have even attempted to obtain redress! The advantages are two, and both of the highest value: one is always in our power, the other we may probably secure. By this means we preserve our own souls from being injured by anger and malice, and our charity may triumph in *gaining our brother*. Let us not, however, forget that this counsel of our Lord is more than prudential advice; it is his direction; and has therefore the force of a COMMAND.

Verse 16. *Of two or three witnesses.*—It was the judicial rule to require the testimony of not less than two or three witnesses to establish a charge, Deut. xix, 15. And it was probably the practice with the Jews to adopt it in settling private disputes. Here, indeed, the persons to be brought by the injured party are not witnesses of the fact of the injury, but of the charitable attempt made by him who had received it to bring the offender to a better mind, and to give him an opportunity of making an acknowledgment of his fault, and of repairing it. They were to aid in endeavouring to settle the matter of complaint; and, if unsuccessful, to give testimony of the whole proceeding to *the Church;* to which the first appeal was to be made. The wisdom of this advice has not failed to arrest the attention of subsequent Jewish writers. Buxtorf has produced a passage from one of them in which the words of Christ are manifestly copied: "The wise man says, If thy friend does thee an injury, reprove him between him and thee alone: if he hears thee, thou hast already gained him: if he does not hear thee, speak to him before one or two, who may consider the matter; and, if he will not hear, reckon him

take with thee one or two more, that in [h] the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a [i] heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, [k] Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be

[h] Deut. xix, 15; John viii, 17; 2 Cor. xiii, 1; Hebrews x, 28;

[i] 1 Cor. v, 9; 2 Thess. iii, 14.—[k] John xx, 23; 1 Cor. v, 4.

a worthless friend." This author would not mention Christ by name, but says, generally, "the wise man," or "one of the wise men," the name by which their doctors were distinguished. Maimonides, too, has a passage borrowed from the same source, which may be regarded as a paraphrase upon our Lord's words, and furnishes an excellent comment also upon a part of them. "He that reproveth his friend, whether for things between him and himself, or whether for things between him and God, ought to reprove him alone; and should speak to him mildly, and in tender language, and let him know that he speaks to him for his good, and to bring him to everlasting life.

Verse 17. *Tell it to the Church.*—The *assembly*. The Jews would understand by this word, the congregation collected in the synagogue; for it was their practice to proclaim obstinate offenders there. So Maimonides, "If any refuse to feed his children, they reprove him, they shame him, they urge him: if he still refuse, they make proclamation against him in the synagogue." But our Lord looks to the establishment of his own Church, and the exercise of discipline in those *assemblies* of Christians which, though like the Jewish synagogues they have the power of discipline within themselves, yet collectively form his universal *Church*, as the synagogues collectively formed the general Jewish Church. The apostles who then followed him may be considered as the elements of his Church at that time; but it could scarcely be considered as constituted until after the day of pentecost, when regular assemblies under apostolic direction were formed, the worship of God arranged, the Supper of the Lord administered, and the terms of communion mutually acknowledged. Christ must therefore be considered as speaking prospectively.

But if he neglect to hear the Church, &c.—The great rules of Church discipline are here most distinctly laid down. The Church is to hear the case; to advise and admonish in order to correct and *save* the offending person; but if the admonitions and counsels of the Church are obstinately disregarded, then the offender is to be put out of communion, and to be to the injured person and to the Church itself as a heathen man and a publican; that is, all religious connection is to be broken off with him; he is, as St. Paul expresses it, to be "put away." But this is all: no civil disabilities are to be inflicted upon him, much less pains and penalties: and as our Lord treated "heathens and publicans" with compassion and kindness, and sought their salvation, so the advice he here gives is to be interpreted by his conduct; and the separated and disowned brother is still to be the object of charity and sympathy, and every means is to be taken to effect his restoration.

Verse 18. *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, &c.*—Great obscurity has been thrown around this passage by mistaking its relation to the preceding verses, and by referring the binding and loosing to *persons*, in the sense of forgiving and retaining their sins, instead of to *things*, as the words themselves declare. *Whatsoever* matters or things *ye shall bind*, &c., οσα εαν δησητε κ. τ. λ. For the import of the phrases *to bind* and *to loose*, see the note on chap. xvi, 19, where the same promise is made through Peter to the apostles. To understand this passage clearly it is necessary to consider that, as the various matters of dispute which would arise among *brethren*, or Christians, involved moral questions, and these were to be referred, in the last resort, to the Church, they must be determined by some fixed and settled RULES. Now Christianity is a more perfect dispensation of moral duties, as well as of grace.—This is proved from our Lord's sermon on the mount, and many other of his discourses, where he not only refutes modern errors, but places ancient truths in clearer light, and shows their limitation or extension more accurately, and adds many others. This is farther confirmed by the moral part of the writings of the apostles, in which all the holy *principles* laid down in the Old Testament, and in the discourses of Christ, are drawn out into particular injunctions, and applied to the various personal, civil, ecclesiastical, and social duties incumbent upon Christians.—It was therefore necessary, after our Lord, with reference to the discipline to be exercised in his future Church, had prescribed the mode of dealing with offenders, that he should speak of the rules or laws by which all such cases were to be determined, and the source from which they should emanate. These rules or laws were to be brought in by the apostles, to whom the Holy Spirit was to be given in the plenitude of his inspiration, to bring the doctrines which Christ himself had taught to their "remembrance," and "to lead

bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? [1] till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

[1] St. Luke, chap. xvii, 4.

them into all truth," necessary to complete the Christian system. Now these were to be the sole and only laws by which things were to be *bound* or *loosed*; that is, as shown in the note just referred to, declared *lawful* or *unlawful*, binding upon men's consciences or otherwise; and consequently, by these rules, Christians were to form their private judgment respecting what is right or wrong in their various kinds and degrees, and by the same rules the censures or otherwise of "the Church" were to be solely directed. These words therefore were spoken to the apostles, as indeed was the whole preceding discourse: for the eleven, after they had disputed about superiority, by the way, joined Peter and Christ in the house; and the twelve being thus collected, and they only, our Lord delivers to them that series of addresses which this chapter contains. When, therefore, our Lord says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," &c., he repeats the promise he had before made to them, that they should be made the infallible teachers of the whole truth of his religion, and applies it to the practical use which should be made of the doctrines they were to leave on record, as rules to determine all moral questions in the Church; with the same assurance as before, that their inspired decisions should be confirmed in heaven, as being in fact the rules and principles on which the moral government of God would, through all future time, be conducted. No man, therefore, or body of men, can have power to bind or loose in the Church, but he who is inspired to know what the laws of the Divine government are; for nothing which is declared on earth can hold good in heaven, as determining what is pleasing or displeasing to God, but what is in fact a revelation of God's own will, which is the law of his creatures. The apostles only had that revelation, and they only therefore had the power to declare what was lawful or the contrary, "to bind and to loose."

Verses 19, 20. *If two of you shall agree, &c.*—These verses are both connected with the same subject. That plenary inspiration by which the apostles were to be led into all truth, and to be made the infallible instructers of the Church and the world, was not to be granted to them without earnest prayer. Accordingly, after the resurrection of Christ, they were directed to "tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high." "And these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." "And when the day of pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place," still engaged in the same exercise. Thus they *agreed on earth as touching the thing they should ask*, the "power from on high." They were *gathered together in the name of Christ*, by his authority, professing their faith in him, and waiting the fulfilment of his promise; and he, though he had ascended to heaven, was *in the midst of them*, in his spiritual presence and the wonderful effusions of his Spirit, and what they asked *was done for them of their Father which is in heaven*. This is clearly the primary meaning of these verses; but they contain general truths of a most consolatory kind, and in the strongest manner encourage the unity of Christians and their meeting together for prayer. "Where two or three are gathered together," with one accord, "in his name," and agree to ask what he has promised to bestow, their prayers shall be answered in a spiritual manifestation of the presence of Christ, and the communication of the fulness of all spiritual blessings.

Verse 21. *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me?*—Peter, rightly judging that what had been enjoined on the subject of *gaining* a brother who had committed a wrong, necessarily implied that the injured party should be ready to forgive the injury, inquires how often this placable disposition was to be exercised.

Till seven times?—If the notions of the rabbins of our Lord's time on this subject of forgiveness were the same as those of a later date, Peter's charity went beyond the Jewish limit, which extended to "three times and no more." "He that says, I have sinned, and I repent, they forgive him to three times, and no more." Probably, however, Peter was not acquainted with the rabbinical rules, and merely meant by seven times, *very often*; taking it for granted, that there must be a limit to forgiveness. Our Lord's reply, *Until seventy times seven*, signifies an inde-

23 ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand * talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and †worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred ‡pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

* A talent is 750 ounces of silver; which, after five shillings the ounce, is 187*l.* 10*s.*

† Or, *besought him.*—‡ The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce; which, after five shillings the ounce, is sevenpence halfpenny.

finite number, a number which has no limit. As often as an offending brother, as stated by St. Luke, shall "turn again to thee, and repent," so often art thou to forgive. By forgiveness is here meant that which extends to actual reconciliation. Great prominence is given to this duty in the discourses of our Lord; all the angry, and harsh, and malignant passions are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of his religion His coming into the world was the result of infinite pity and kindness to the race of man, and his own example of placability and benevolence must be followed by his disciples, or they will be at length disowned by him. This is as strongly enforced as it is beautifully exemplified by the parable which follows.

Verse 23. *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, &c.*—That is, the conduct of the sovereign Ruler in the new dispensation of the Gospel may be likened to that of *a certain king, &c.*, *ανθρωπω βασιλει, ανθρωπος* being used for *τις*.

Which would take account of his servants.—The servants here probably are of that class who were intrusted with the collection of the king's revenue. *To take account, συναιραι λογον*, is a formula which denotes, like the Latin, *conferre rationes*, to *settle an account.* The *servants* here mentioned were not slaves; *δουλος*, like עבד, being often used in a larger sense. That here it is not to be taken for slave is plain, the debtor being afterward appointed *to be sold* to pay his debt, which would have been of no benefit to the master had he been a slave, and therefore already the property of his owner.

Verse 24. *Ten thousand talents.*—A talent of silver contained three thousand shekels, and was in value £375 of our money. A talent of gold was equal to £4500; but the latter is seldom meant, except where expressed. But the sum in silver was immense, and stands for an indefinitely large amount, to intimate the exceeding greatness of our debt toward God; arising out of obligations of gratitude, obedience, and service, in which we have all so failed that our iniquities are more in number than "the sands of the sea-shore."

Verse 25. *His lord commanded him to be sold, &c.*—This was the custom in several ancient nations beside the Jews.

Verse 26. *And I will pay thee all.*—To avert so dire a calamity as to be sold into slavery, the insolvent debtor appeals to the mercy of his lord; he falls at his feet; pays him the lowliest homage; acknowledges the debt, but asks for the indulgence of delay; and promises ultimate payment. All these circumstances complete the picture drawn by the parable, but are to be cautiously interpreted to a spiritual sense. This, however, may be observed, that we are taught that the only way to forgiveness is to acknowledge our debts, and to appeal only to MERCY. The promise of paying so large a debt was, indeed, a futile one; but it probably glances at that too frequent presumption which clings to all penitents in the first instance, that they shall be able by future acts of zealous service, to make some compensation for past offences. The free and princely munificence of our Lord, however, spurns all these vain offers of compromise; he "is RICH to all them that call upon him;" he "giveth liberally, and upbraideth not;" or, as his character and acts of grace are here affectingly described, "The lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

Verse 28. *The same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, &c.*—Not immediately perhaps, but after some time; after those grateful emotions which he ought always to have cherished, had been suffered to subside; after he had, through unfaithfulness to the grace given, suffered the example of his lord's clemency, pity, and munificence to lose its effect upon him; after the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, with all its obdurating influence upon the affections, had been suffered to establish itself in his heart; yes, the same servant, mark the emphasis, THAT *servant*, himself, whose prayers and tears had moved the compassion of his lord,

29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

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so that, by a munificent liberality, he had cancelled his debt of immense amount, *found one of his fellow servants*, who owed him *a hundred pence*, *denarii*, each of the value of seven pence three farthings, and making the paltry sum of £3 2*s*. 6*d*., sterling, and laid hands upon him, and took him by the throat, *επνιγε*, *throttled him*, showing equal violence of temper, and hard heartedness; and refusing to listen to the very same prayer, which he himself had imploringly offered to his lord. *And he would not; but cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt;* the whole debt, which he relentlessly exacted. This excited the *indignant grief* of the rest of the servants, who were not unacquainted with the gracious manner in which he had been treated by the common master, to whom they make known, *διασαφειν*, gave exact information of the affair.

Verse 34. *To the tormentors.*—Βασανιζαι may here simply signify the jailers, or keepers of the prison, who, from their harshness, and, indeed, the punishments they were often directed anciently to inflict upon criminals, might have this appellation. It does not, indeed, appear that men were punished by torment simply for debt; but in this case, the man who had conducted himself so unfeelingly toward his fellow servant had incurred the strong displeasure of the king, and was to be regarded as a sort of state prisoner as well as debtor; and such criminals, under the despotisms of the east, were usually treated with great severity.

Verse 35. *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also to you, &c.*—"With what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again;" if we stand so rigorously upon our *rights* in our transactions with our fellow creatures, as to forget the claims of benevolence and mercy, we must ourselves be content to be dealt with by God in the way of exact justice; if we are deaf to the voice of imploring distress, how should we expect God to hear our cry in that day of trouble, which, notwithstanding present prosperity, will come upon us. And if we *forgive not every one his brother*, and that *from the heart*, we shall not obtain forgiveness. This is so expressly laid down by Christ, as the rule of the Divine conduct toward us, even under the new covenant of grace, that we shall greatly deceive ourselves if we expect that any indulgence will be shown to our morose and uncharitable tempers. It becomes us, therefore, very carefully to cultivate the opposite dispositions, that, not merely from fear, but from the free and generous spirit of our religion, we may show mercy as we have received mercy, and forgive as we hope to be forgiven. The example of our heavenly Father ought to engage us to this duty; the comfort of our minds in reflecting, especially at the Lord's table, that we are "in love and charity" with all men; and, finally, our hope of heaven; for this parable plainly teaches that our unforgiving spirit will cancel our own forgiveness with God, and place us under his displeasure, both in time and eternity.

CHAPTER XIX.

2 Christ healeth the sick: 3 answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement: 10 showeth when marriage is necessary: 13 receiveth little children: 16 instructeth the young man how to attain eternal life, 20 and how to be perfect: 23 telleth his disciples how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, 27 and promiseth reward to those that forsake any thing to follow him.

1 And it came to pass, [a] *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan;

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, [b] that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, [c] For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and [d] they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, [e] Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

[a] Mark x, 1.—[b] Gen. i, 27.—[c] Gen. ii, 24; Ephes. v, 31.—[d] 1 Cor. vi, 16.—[e] Deut. xxiv, 1.

CHAPTER XIX. Verse 1. *Into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan.*—No part of Judea was *beyond Jordan*, unless we suppose Perea to be sometimes designated Judea, which, indeed, was the case with foreigners; but, in the gospels, the distinction of the districts of Palestine is accurately maintained. Περαν του Ιορδανου may then be taken to signify, as in Mark, *by the farther side of Jordan;* that is, through the country which lay along the other side of Jordan.

Verse 3. *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?*—That is, any cause whatever. This was a point in dispute among the learned Jews themselves. The school of Hillel allowed divorce for any cause of dissatisfaction whatever, interpreting the clause, Deut. xxiv, 1, "And she find no favour in his eyes," in the freest possible manner, and separate from its connection with the following clause: "because he hath found some uncleanness in her." On the contrary, the school of Schammah, by a strict interpretation of the whole passage, limited divorce to cases of adultery. The Jews in general followed the most licentious interpretation, and were notoriously guilty of putting away their wives on trivial occasions. Hence Josephus coolly states that he divorced his wife μη αρεσκομενος αυτης τοις εθεσι, "not being pleased with her manners." In putting their question on this subject to our Lord, the Pharisees are said to have *tempted* him; they not only designed to make *trial* of his far famed wisdom as an expounder of the law, but they probably expected that he would decide on the stricter side, and wished to find an occasion of cavilling at the rigidness of his doctrine. Our Lord did not disappoint them; he decided in favour of purity and morality, and, in a manner wholly unanswerable, showed how they had departed from the original institution of marriage. "In the beginning," when man was in his purity and perfection, but one male and one female were created, a sufficient proof that polygamy is contrary to the original constitution of human nature and society; and has been confirmed in all ages and countries to this day, by the nearly equal proportion of male and female births. This circumstance alone, which necessarily supposes providential arrangement, strongly indicates polygamy to be contrary to the will of God; and if so, it determines the question of divorce; for divorces at the mere caprices of the parties, "for every cause," by leading to the marrying of many women, though in succession, was but polygamy in another form. But there was not only the original fact, the creation of but one man and one woman; Moses has also recorded the original law, which was made prospectively for the descendants of the first pair, and this our Lord adduces in the next verse.

Verse 5. *And said, For this cause shall a man leave father, &c.*—In Genesis these words appear to have been spoken by Adam when Eve was brought to him; but as they were not applicable to himself, who had no *father and mother*, they are to be considered as spoken to his descendants, and therefore prophetically, and under Divine authority, as laying down the LAW OF MARRIAGE for future generations, and they are therefore here said to have been spoken by God, whose voice Adam was. "For this cause," because she was "taken out of the man, shall a man leave

8 He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 [f] And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, All *men*

[f] Matt. v, 32; Mark x, 11; Luke xvi, 18; 1 Cor. vii, 11.

his father and mother, and cleave unto προσκολληθησεται, shall be firmly cemented to his wife;" marriage creating a closer and more indissoluble relation than even blood; "and they twain shall be one flesh," or body, as the oldest versions properly render it, and not to be dissolved by your divorces. *What therefore God hath joined together*, by this primitive example and law, *let not man put asunder*. This law of marriage no man is at liberty to break, and no legislature or state has the power to modify or alter. The bond is absolutely indissoluble in every case but that by which the great Lawgiver himself has dissolved it, the single case of adultery; so that marriage is a sacred, and not a mere civil institution; and whatever laws are made respecting it must, to acquire any validity, be based upon the supreme law itself, and fully recognize it, in all its extent. The words, "what God hath joined," or yoked "together," contain a metaphor taken from the yoking of oxen, frequently found also in Greek and Latin writers, of which Wetstein adduces several examples. It was adopted probably from the important moral which it suggests: first, that in forming marriages, there should be mutual fitness between the parties; "be not unequally yoked:" second, as to their future conduct, that they should both pull one way, and take their common share in the cares of life, as "helps meet for each other." In illustration of this, it was a part of the marriage ceremony in some ancient nations to put a yoke upon the necks of the newly married couple.

Verse 8. *Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement? &c.*—The law of Moses did not command or encourage divorces; but it did not prohibit them strictly within the rule of the original law, because of *the hardness of the hearts* of the Jews, meaning probably, in compassion to the oppressed condition of the women themselves, put under the tyranny of a rigid race of men. What Moses *commanded* was, that in all such cases a bill of divorce should be given, (see note on Matt. i, 19,) in order that there might be time for reflection, and that the separation should not be made on the momentary impulse of passion; which bill of divorcement required witnesses, so that no man or woman could pretend to be at liberty to marry again when they were not; but must produce the writing in evidence. Moses did this not of his own authority, but under Divine direction, as in all the other laws he delivered; so that here is no plea for any private person or government to infringe upon the original law of the marriage relation. He only who gave the law has the right to relax it. That relaxation was, however, but temporary; and our Lord here again takes the character of lawgiver, as well as teacher, by re-enacting the original law, and abrogating the relaxation, though that rested upon the same author as the other Mosaic institutions. "From the beginning it was not so," nor shall it be henceforward; for I say unto you, "Whoever shall put away his wife," &c. This then is the formally promulged law of the Christian dispensation. "The Lord hateth putting away;" and in no case is it permitted but that one in which the very essence of the relation is previously destroyed, and the twain have ceased to be "one flesh."

Verse 10. *If the case of a man be so, &c.*—Αιτια signifies here a *condition* or *relation*; the disciples meaning that if for the innumerable vexations and trials which may probably arise in the marriage state, and for the vices into which a wife may fall short of adultery, there is no remedy by divorce; *it is not good to marry*. This might be true in a few cases, but certainly not generally; and whatever trials may arise out of that state, the remedy lies not in giving facility to divorces. It is the very permanence of the relation which usually calls forth prudence in forming the connection, and the idea of indissolubility has a powerful effect in bringing the parties to make the best of their lot, even when they are not the most fitly married, and often effects a salutary accommodation. Besides, our Lord must be considered as having respect to the spirit and influence of his own religion, in bringing in again the original law of marriage in all its force. That "hardness of heart" which the early Jews appear to have been remarkable for could have no place where a religion of perfect benevolence was received, and where women were to have great honour and consideration, as they have had from its very commencement. For such a religion, which softens the character of man, and exalts that of woman; which places them in equal relations to God, as "heirs together of the grace of life;" which sancti-

cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

13 ¶ ε Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

ε Mark x, 13; Luke xviii, 15.

fies marriage by mutual prayer, and tends more than any other to make them one *soul* as well as "one *flesh*," the original law had an admirable adaptation. It was a law of purity, sentiment, and dignity, fitted to the elevated character of Christian matrimony.

Verse 11. *All men cannot receive this saying.*—Our Lord's answer to the disciples is not direct; it is rather grounded upon a concession: "Granting that it is as you say, that it is not good to marry, that this is a state not so much of choice as of convenience, and brings with it many evils; yet, if this were true to the extent you suppose, 'all men cannot receive this saying,' this opinion;" or, as χωρεω here must signify, all are not *capable* of it, that is, of abstaining from marriage, or, according to the Syriac version, "are not sufficient for this thing;" *but they only to whom it is given*, they who are especially called to it, and have grace given them to remain in a single state with entire purity of thought and conduct.

Verse 12. *There are some eunuchs, &c.*—Ευνουχος is from ευνη, *a bed*, and εχω, one who has the charge of a bedchamber, persons principally employed in the harems of oriental kings to take charge of and guard their women. These were emasculated for that purpose; but as they often rose to posts of eminence in such courts, the word is sometimes used for a minister of state or officer of rank, without including the idea of such degradation. *Eunuchs from their mother's womb* are those who are either continent from natural infirmity or constitution; *eunuchs of men* are the persons above referred to; and *eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake* are not those who practise celibacy under the idea of attaining higher purity and merit, but those who, for the advancement of the Gospel, voluntarily live single in order to give up themselves uninterruptedly to establish and extend it; and may also comprehend those who, in times of great persecution and danger, choose rather to remain unmarried than expose families to the sufferings which they expect to be called to endure, or to leave them friendless by their own martyrdom. Our Lord, however, adds, *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*, that is, let no one receive it except he who is able or qualified to live in this state without sin. So far therefore was our Lord, as the papists pretend, from discouraging marriage, or representing celibacy as a state of greater honour than marriage, that he commands it only in such a case of necessity as should arise out of the promotion of "the kingdom of heaven" in the world. In only a few persons, and at particular times, could such a case arise in which public usefulness would be more promoted by celibacy. Ordinarily, men are more useful, both as ministers and other officers in the Church, when married; but when the Gospel was to be preached by itinerating apostles and their coadjutors, when they had "no certain dwelling place," and when they were persecuted from one city to another, as to some public characters in the Church, family duties and those they owed to their office might be incompatible; and it was then their praise voluntarily to give up the honourable relations of husband and parent, in the way of sacrifice, for the glory of Christ and the interests of religion. Yet even these are admonished that they are not to *receive the saying* unless they are *able to receive it*, not without a sufficient call of duty, confirmed to them by the communication of special and sufficient grace.

Verse 13. *Then were there brought unto him little children, &c.*—That these children were very young, appears from the word βρεφος, used by St. Luke, which signifies a child from his birth to the age of four years; and also from the action of our Saviour, who "took them up in his arms." That they were the children of believers, that is, of those who received our Lord as the Messiah, is not so clear; they, however, at least believed him to be a person of great sanctity and a prophet, for from such persons the Jews were accustomed to seek a benediction upon their children; that is, prayer to God for his blessing, accompanied by the imposition of hands, which was used by the Jews in invoking God in behalf of another.—Hence it is said, they brought them *that he should put his hands on them and pray.*

And the disciples rebuked them.—They did this either because of the number who crowded around their Master, and so they thought it might be too troublesome for him to go through this ceremony with them all, or because they thought it below his dignity to be thus employed, as though he were an ordinary prophet. Whatever might be the

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

motive, their rebuking of the parents only gave occasion for a more illustrious display of his condescension and humility, and for teaching them and his ministers, throughout all ages, to encourage and not forbid children to be brought to him in acts of piety.

Verse 14. *Of such are the kingdom of heaven.*—The reason which our Lord here gives for bringing children to him, could by no means apply to the case, if they were brought to be healed of diseases, as some have asserted, grounding their notion upon St. Mark's words, "that he would *touch* them." There is an obvious connection between their being solemnly blessed by Christ, which was a spiritual act, and being members of his kingdom, which is a spiritual relation; but between such membership, and the healing of their bodily diseases, there is none; since "multitudes" were healed by Christ in different places, who were not at the time, and probably never became, the subjects of his spiritual and heavenly kingdom. Nor can the words in St. Matthew, that he should "put his hands upon them and pray," be interpreted by those of St. Mark, if the latter are to be understood of *touching* in the sense of healing; while St. Mark's expression is easily interpreted by that of St. Matthew.—Neither are we to understand with some, that the word τοιούτων, rendered by us, *of such*, means merely *of such like*, of such as *resemble* little children in disposition. There is, we allow, an ambiguity in the word, and in all others of the same class; but the sense must be determined by an honest construction of the connection and scope of the passage in which they are used. This is plainly against the interpretation; for what kind of reason was it for our Lord to give to the disciples in order to prevent them from interfering to prevent little children from being brought to him, that other persons, not children, but of a disposition in some respects resembling them, were the subjects of the kingdom of God? The absurdity refutes itself, and the reason for suffering the children to be brought to Christ must necessarily be found in themselves, and not in others; so that we are bound to conclude that, in some sense, "the kingdom of heaven" is composed of them, they are its subjects, and partakers of its blessings. That this kingdom signifies the spiritual kingdom of Christ upon earth, and also that glorious reign of God over redeemed and glorified men in a future world, are points not to be disputed; and the words of our Lord, if they relate to one, must relate to both. If little children are the subjects of his spiritual kingdom on earth, then, until the moment that by actual sin they bring personal condemnation upon themselves, they remain heirs of the kingdom of eternal glory; and if they become the subjects of the latter by dying, then a previous vital relation must have existed on earth between them and Christ as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; or else we must assign the sanctification of the nature of man, which even in infants is fallen and corrupt, to a future state, which is contrary to the Scriptures. Our Lord's words, therefore, respect that mediatorial kingdom which he was then employed in establishing; and they have a farther prospective reference to a future state of felicity. As to both, however, it is to be observed that children under the years of accountability are the subjects spoken of, and these alone. That all such stand in a spiritual relation to him, as the sovereign of "the kingdom of heaven," the head of this Church, is proved from his own words, and that this relation is not a merely nominal, but a vital and beneficial one, appears as clearly from his praying for them, putting his hands upon them and blessing them; all which, being acts of favour and acceptance, indicated their most certain heirship, through his merits and intercession, should they die before forfeiture of this grace by personal actual offence, to the felicities of immortal life in his perfected kingdom above. Thus this important passage satisfactorily proves the share which infants have in the mercies of the Redeemer, both in this and in a future life: how far it establishes a right to administer to them the ordinance of Christian baptism, is a distinct question. Taken alone, it can only be made use of for that purpose as supporting a general presumption; but in connection with the more direct arguments usually employed on this subject, it presents a very favourable aspect toward this practice, and was so regarded in the primitive Church. That these children were not baptized by Christ, is allowed; and for this it is a sufficient reason to give, that proper Christian baptism was not then instituted; but as the words plainly indicate that infants are the subjects of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ in the way of grace and acceptance, it appears fitting that they should receive some *sign* of that relation, and that there should be some visible declaration of their being comprehended in the new covenant, as there was of the comprehension of the children of the descendants of Abraham, in the ancient edition of the same covenant of grace, of which the rite of circumcision was the sign and seal. Previous to the children, here brought to

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

16 ¶ [h] And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest

[h] Mark x, 17; Luke xviii, 18.

Christ, receiving the blessing of Christ, they stood in a relation of grace to him, of which his manner of receiving them was both a visible sign and seal; and the value of that consisted in its being both. It was thus a public declaration of the love of Christ to infants, of the certainty of their salvation, and of these being the objects of his prayers, which could not be offered without beneficial effect; while it encouraged a pious act upon the part of the parents, and placed them under responsibility to train them up in religion and piety. To this, although the weight of the argument rests upon other grounds, it must be acknowledged that infant baptism bears an interesting correspondence. It recognizes the previous grace and good will of Christ to children; it is an act of piety in which they are brought to Christ for his blessing; it is a standing public declaration of the interest which the infant part of the human race have in the atonement; it places parents under proper vows and responsibilities as to the religious education of their children; and if by other arguments from holy Writ it is satisfactorily proved to have taken the place of circumcision, and to be properly a sacrament, it is not only a *sign*, but a *seal*, of the covenant of grace granted for the comfort and encouragement of parents, and by which the full grace of that covenant is confirmed to their children as they are fitted to receive it; beside the advantage of a visible connection with the Christian Church, answering to that invisible connection which, *independent of any outward rite*, they, in fact, enjoy by virtue of their federal union with its Head.

Verse 16. *One came.*—He was a *young* man, as appears from a subsequent verse; and *rich*; and, as stated by St. Luke, a *ruler*, a civil magistrate, or, it may be, one of the sanhedrim. His inquiry was most important; but youth, riches, and rank were to put his compliance with the counsel he sought to a severe test, and at length they carried it against his convictions.

Good Master.—That this young man had great veneration for Christ appears from his manner of approaching him, "kneeling," as stated by St. Mark; but that he only regarded him as a prophet, not as the Divine Messiah, is as manifest. It is on this ground, therefore, that our Lord reproves him for using the title of respect to him, "Good Master," which he ought to have reserved for God alone; for the rabbins were wont to exact high titles from their disciples; and under the view of conciliating our Lord, this young man approached him in the language of indecorous compliment. This title, however, was not rejected by our Lord because improperly *applicable* to him, but because it was improperly *applied* by one who regarded him only as a mere man, or at best but as a human being, not as the Divine Messiah. The argument which has therefore been sometimes built upon this text, to prove that Christ himself disclaimed Divinity, is wholly unsound; for our Lord did not in this case restrain one from calling him "good," who came professing his persuasion that he was a Divine person; or one who entreated him to do an act which supposed Divine power, and so might be considered as implying such a persuasion; but one who addressed him only as a teacher, good TEACHER, διδασκαλε αγαθε, and proposed a question which all eminent teachers among the Jews professed to answer: "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life!" For want of attending to this, the orthodox, fearing the perverted use which Arians and Socinians have ever been ready to make of this passage, have too eagerly caught at a various reading, which appears in some MSS. and versions, and which is supported by several of the fathers. It is, Τι με ερωτας περι του αγαθου: "Why askest thou me concerning good?" But the internal evidence alone is destructive of this emendation, because it deprives what follows of all meaning; for whether we read the sequel as in the received text, Ουδεις αγαθος, ει μη εις, ο Θεος, "*There is* none good but one, *that is* God," or Εις εστιν ο αγαθος, "There is one that is good," &c.: the words have no perceivable connection with the previous part of the reply, "Why askest thou me concerning good?" which, according to this reading, means not the good *being*, but the good *thing* which was to be done in order to attain life. A most preponderating weight of authority ought to be produced from MSS. and versions before the text can be resigned to so disjointing and destructive a criticism: but the truth is, that the evidence from versions is nearly balanced, while that of the MSS. is beyond comparison superior in favour of the common reading; which alone furnishes a consistent or indeed a conceivable meaning. For, as Campbell well observes, "Nothing can be more pertinent than to say, 'If you believe that God alone is good, why do you call me so?' whereas nothing can appear less pertinent than, 'If you believe that God alone is good, why do you consult me concerning the good that you must do?'"

thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, [i] Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.

19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

[i] Exodus, chap. xx, 13.

But if thou wilt enter into life, &c.—If thou art sincerely and seriously bent upon the great work of salvation, keep the commandments. Thus while he reproves him for using flattering titles, and through him still more forcibly reproved the pride of the Pharisaic rabbins, he condescends to answer an inquiry which appears to have been proposed with an honest intention. The answer of our Lord is not to be understood as given with reference to the covenant of works, the ground on which some commentators place it, under the idea that if it was a serious and not a hypothetic direction, it would be inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith. The answer is to be considered with reference to the young man's question, which was, not, "How shall I be justified?" but "How shall I enter into eternal life," or be finally saved? It is in no respect therefore an answer inconsistent with Christian doctrine, which, while it teaches that we are justified by faith only, as strongly enjoins that, if we would enter into life, and be finally saved, we must keep the commandments. The connection of this obedience with the atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, it is true, is not fully brought forward; but nothing is said contrary to either, and the case did not as yet require farther doctrinal explanation.

Verse 18. *He saith to him, Which, &c.*—He alludes to the vain distinctions made by the Pharisees between greater and smaller commandments, and the greatest and the least; or, it is perhaps still more probable, from the answer of our Lord, that he wished to know whether he referred to moral rules or to ritual observances, the importance of which had been so magnified by the Pharisees as to lead to the neglect of "the weightier matters of the law," justice, mercy, and charity. Those commandments which our Lord selects as necessary to be observed, do not exclude the others contained in the two tables, but are adduced as INSTANCES of moral, in opposition to ritual, obedience; and he leaves the decalogue to bring in the general command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is in Levit. xix, 18, in order to show that he comprehended all the moral precepts of the law, as well as those of the decalogue. This manner of quoting a part for the whole was familiar with the Jews. It is also observable that our Lord does not follow the order of the commands of the second table; probably to show, as the Jews themselves express it, that "there is neither first nor last in the law;" and that, such is the perfection and fulness of every precept, it is of no consequence which is first or last quoted. Various reasons have been given, why Christ mentions only the duties of the second table, not the first; our duty to our neighbour, and not to God; but the true one lies upon the surface. The love of God, in which all the precepts of the first table are summed up, can only be made manifest and proved by our obedience to his moral commands; and where that is, in the true extent, and as arising from right principles, the other cannot be wanting. Nor is this a proof to others only; it is the best proof to ourselves, since we thus know, and perhaps only thus fully know, whether we truly love God, or are under the influence of a mere inoperative sentiment and emotion.

Verse 20. *All these things have I kept from my youth up.*—From this it appears that, though a young man, he was not very young; for his answer supposes a considerable space between his coming to the knowledge of good and evil, and the present time. Indeed, his being *a ruler* sufficiently indicates that he was not in the common acceptation *a youth*. That, as to the letter and his outward conduct, he had observed these commands, is probable; and that he had been from his childhood serious and moral. But that he knew not "the length and breadth" of the law in its spirituality, is abundantly manifest; and that he formed much too high an estimate of his virtue, the sequel speedily proved.

Verse 21. *If thou wilt be perfect.*—The question of the young man, *What lack I yet?* that is, In what am I deficient? explains the meaning of the term *perfect*, as it is here used. If thou wilt be *complete*, so that nothing shall be wanting in thee in order to attain eternal life, fully renounce the world, and become a spiritual man. *Sell all that*

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.—Thus was he brought to the test. Christ approved of his seriousness and general character; and beholding in him what was amiable and hopeful, as it is said by Mark, "he loved him," he manifested a strong emotion of affection toward him; and now throws open to him that gate of life which he desired to enter. In a word, he invites him to become one of his select and more intimate disciples, to be trained up by him to a more perfect knowledge of spiritual things, and to be thereby qualified to teach them to others. But this privilege he could only obtain by making sacrifices; and, much as Christ loved him, he did not lighten the cross which he was to take up; and for a reason which ought to sustain us under the crosses which may be appointed to us to bear; he did not lighten it, *because he loved him.* This was *his* only way to life: a smaller demand might be made upon others consistent with their safety; but his secret attachment to wealth, rank, and external influence could only thus be detected and exposed to himself, and be cured by one mighty act of self-renunciation. But here his feeble virtue failed; for *he went away sorrowful;* not cavilling at the answer, not angry, but *grieving*, inwardly convinced that Christ had opened to him the only sure way of life, yet so entangled by earthly affections, that he could not make an effort toward it. *For he had great possessions.* This is a touching relation, heightened at every step by the seriousness of the young man's inquiry after eternal life; the respectful manner of his approach to Christ; the excellence of his moral character from his earliest youth; the affection with which our Lord regarded him; the sorrowful struggle of spirit with which he departed; and, to close the whole, the perfect silence respecting him afterward, which renders it probable that *he gained the world*, which he could not sacrifice, and *lost his soul.* It is left on record as a solemn warning against preferring the things of earth to the interests of our salvation; and especially to guard the young against closing their hearts against the calls of Christ, under the influence of worldly hopes and pleasures. On this young ruler being required to sell his property and renounce his civil offices and rank, and to follow Christ, it may be remarked that not only did He who knew the heart of man see that this way was necessary for his salvation, but that it was no more than he had required of all the apostles, who left all and followed him, in order to be his immediate and peculiar disciples; and farther, that for a short time, and for reasons arising out of the peculiar state of the Jewish Church after the day of pentecost, all the rich were required to sell their possessions, and form a common fund, out of which the wants of all were to be supplied, while they all gave themselves up to spiritual exercises, in order to lay the foundations of the new religion broad and deep among the wondering people. That this was a temporary arrangement, will be shown in the proper place. In this instance, however, the young man was not required to bring his wealth into the common stock, from which Christ and his disciples were supported.

It was too great a property to be so applied. The whole wealth our Lord admitted appears to have been carried by Judas in a bag, which was replenished as occasion required by the small contributions of a few pious persons, chiefly women; and even this was regarded with so little attention, that Judas occasionally robbed it without being called to account, although the omniscient eye of our Lord could not be deceived. The injunction, therefore, was, "Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor;" and our Lord thereby showed his disinterestedness in the advice he gave, while all suspicion would have been precluded, had the young man had the courage to follow the advice.

Verse 23. *A rich man shall hardly enter, &c.*—He may enter, but he must do so δυσκολως, *with difficulty;* and whether the kingdom of heaven be understood of the Church on earth, or the state of the glorified in heaven, the words are equally applicable. To enter the visible Church when in a state of prosperity and honour, when in fact, as in nations nominally Christian, that Church embraces the world, is not difficult, being only a matter of education and example; but to be admitted among the truly humble and spiritual, whose names are written in heaven, and who only are considered in truth as composing "the kingdom of heaven," the rich man must make the same renunciations of worldly affections and pride now as in the time of Christ; and whatever difficulties riches then presented, exist now. The hinderances offered by riches to wisdom and virtue were perceived by heathen sages, and remarks to this effect appear in their writings; but their views of virtue were superficial and defective, and the case was but very partially known to them. Riches naturally entangle the heart; but earthly and heavenly affections are incompatible: wealth insensibly nurtures up a feeling of superiority to others; but in the Christian Church each is to prefer another before himself: they tempt to ease and indulgence; whereas the

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

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disciple of Christ is to deny himself, and keep his body under subjection; they are a trust given for the public good; but great is the danger lest the stewards of them should be found unfaithful, and spend upon their own vanities what God designed for others, and for their sakes made the rich the almoners of his bounty: they naturally give their possessors influence and power; but these are among the strongest temptations to arrogance, and self-will, and self-seeking, all of which are forbidden by the meekness and simplicity of our religion. How difficult then is it for a rich man to sink into that spirit of self-renunciation in which alone he can enter Christ's spiritual kingdom, remain a lively member of it, and acquire a full meetness for the future state of felicity!

Verse 24. *It is easier for a camel, &c.*—It has been disputed among critics whether *καμηλον, a camel*, or *καμιλον, a cable rope*, should be here read; and Euthymius and Theophylact contend that both words have the latter meaning. But *καμιλον* has no support from MSS.; and that *καμηλον* signifies a camel cannot be doubted, however otherwise it may be figuratively used. Thus in the proverb, "To strain at a gnat and to swallow a camel," we must understand the animal so called, and not surely a cable rope. Some MSS. of authority, for *διελθειν* have *εισελθειν*; but the sense is not thereby affected. The expression is proverbial and hyperbolical; and as in the Jewish writings we find impossible or absurd endeavours compared to an attempt to make "an elephant pass through the eye of a needle," of which Buxtorf and Lightfoot have given examples, there is no reason for departing from the usual sense. Our Lord here intends to express an *impossibility*, not a mere *difficulty;* but whether an attempt be made to pass a camel or a cable rope through the eye of *a needle, ραφις*, from *ραπτω, to sew*, the impossibility is expressed with equal strength. The conjecture of Harmer in his Observations, that there is here an allusion to the Arabs training their camels to kneel so as to enter low doorways, though with difficulty, is wholly absurd.

Verse 25. *Exceedingly amazed.*—St. Mark says, "astonished out of measure," as still clinging to their notions of an earthly monarchy. That such a kingdom of heaven should exclude the rich and great, might naturally exceedingly surprise them; and indeed might equally surprise us but for what follows. For though we are instructed in the spiritual nature of the dominion of Christ, yet we expect that it shall become universal in extent, and impress its influence upon all ranks, according to the prophecies. But if it be impossible for the rich to enter, we might ask, whether as such they are to be excluded; or whether they must all part with their wealth as a necessary qualification for admission. Even then we should be surrounded with difficulties; because if one parted with his riches, others would gather them; and if property, by an equal distribution, were to be diffused among all, how the affairs of life could be carried on would be a perplexing inquiry. But the whole is relieved by what follows: *with men this is impossible.* *Αδυνατον* is not to be here taken in the sense of *hard* or *difficult*. And an example which has been quoted from Plato in favour of this softer sense is not satisfactory: *πλουσιος δ'ου σφοδρα και αγαθος αδυνατον*, "But it is impossible that they who are very rich should be good also." For the sense of the term is as absolute in these words of Plato as those of our Lord: and what is more conclusive is, that to take *αδυνατον* to signify *difficult*, destroys the point of the text; for we must suppose that, though difficult, it might be done without God, which is contrary to the whole doctrine of our salvation. With men, left to themselves, and without the special succours of an omnipotent grace, it is utterly *impossible* for a rich man to become so humble, so heavenly minded, so simple in intention, so self-denying, as is necessary for his being a member of the true, spiritual Church of Christ; *but with God all things are possible*, which is not to be taken as an abstract truth merely, but is applicable to the occasion. God, by his powerful and renewing influence upon the hearts of the rich, can bring them into this required state of mind, and allow them to retain their rank and riches, yet so that dignity, leisure, wealth, and influence shall all be consecrated to his service, employed for the benefit of mankind, and, by a reflected influence, for the spiritual benefit of the rich themselves. This is one of the noblest triumphs of the grace of God in man; but how few of the rich seek it, and thus become "rich toward God!" Such, however, even in our Lord's days, were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and many illustrious examples afterward.

Verse 27. *We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what, &c.*—This question appears to have been dictated by Peter's reflec-

27 ¶ [k] Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his

[k] Mark x, 28; Luke xviii, 28.

tions upon the case of the young man. He felt that, had he followed the advice of Christ, and forsaken all his riches, he must in some way have been greatly the gainer; and, knowing that he and his fellow apostles, if they had not sacrificed as much, yet had given up *all*, asks what they *should have*, τι αρα εσται ημιν, what should be their reward. This appears to have been an inquiry dictated by the predominance of a spiritual mind; for he must have perceived, from what had been just said, that no hope of earthly advantages was held out by their Master. The answer shows that Christ had approved of their conduct. By giving up all, though little, they had given full proof of their sincerity, and, as Grotius well observes, Christ did not estimate their attachment to him "from the quantity and measure of the things relinquished, but from the mind and intention with which they had relinquished them."

Verse 28. *In the regeneration, &c.*—Παλιγγενεσια signifies the *reproduction, restoration, renovation.* It is used by Cicero to express the restoration of his fortune and dignity; by Josephus, for the reoccupation of Judea, after the captivity; and by Philo, both for the renovation of the earth after the deluge, and to express the new condition of the soul in a future state. It is only once more used in the New Testament, Titus iii, 5; and there is explained by the clause which follows, "the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" which gives it an entirely moral sense, and refers it to the spiritual change which Divine influence produces in the whole character of individual believers. The sense of this passage is greatly determined by the punctuation. If we connect the words, εν τη παλιγγενεσια, with following Christ, these then mean that the course of discipline in which our Lord trained his disciples during his personal abode with them as their teacher was the regeneration spoken of, a sense which it will not well bear; but if we connect this clause with the time when the rewards promised should be conferred upon the apostles, then we must either refer it to the perfected Gospel dispensation, or to what is called the millennial state; or to the resurrection from the dead and the day of judgment. Each of these has been advocated by eminent men; but the two last with little reason. At the day of judgment, not only the twelve tribes of Israel are to be judged, but all mankind; nor do we find that the apostles upon "twelve thrones" are to take that prominent part in the proceedings of that last day which is here assigned them.—The whole doctrine of a millennium, as it is supposed to imply a personal appearance and visible reign of Christ upon earth, will be shown to be contradictory to certain passages which will come under notice in their proper place; and if there be no scriptural ground to expect such an appearance of Christ on earth in glory, then what is here said of the apostles must be referred to some other time. It remains therefore only that "the regeneration" must be understood to signify the perfected dispensation of Christ's Gospel, under which the great and Divine work of human *restoration* from a state of guilt and sin, to the favour and image of God, and that "renewing of the Holy Ghost," by which St. Paul explains the word παλιγγενεσια, was commenced in its power and efficacy, and shall continue as long as the dispensation itself. The Syriac version renders it "the new world," which seems to answer to the Jewish "age to come," which commenced with Messiah's manifestation, and continued to the end of all things. In this view, therefore, the promise thus made to the apostles is, that in this new age, to commence at our Lord's return to his glory, when his renewing and restoring religion should be fully introduced, they should receive the reward of their following him as his disciples at the expense of their entire renunciation of the world.

When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory.—This farther marks the time of the reward. From this expression being used in chap. xxv, 31, when Christ's second coming to judge the world is certainly spoken of, it has been concluded that the same event is here also intended; and it is this which appears to have misled many with respect to the sense of the passage.—But in chap. xxv, 31, this coming of Christ is connected with *circumstances* which oblige us to understand it of Christ's coming to judge the world; and this sense follows from them, not from the mode of expression. In fact, when he ascended into heaven, *he sat upon the throne of his glory*, or his glorious throne; he "entered into his glory;" all power was given to him in heaven and earth, and "angels, principalities, and powers were made subject unto him." The expression, therefore, is not less literally true of his glorification and entrance upon his mediatorial kingdom, than of his coming from heaven to judge the world.

Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.—

glory, [1] ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands,

[1] St. Luke, chap. xxii, 30.

The allusion is here to the φυλαρχαι, or ancient heads of the tribes, who sat near the throne, and assisted the king of Israel in his judgments; or, still more probably, to the Jewish sanhedrim, in which the high priest sat surrounded by the principal rulers and doctors of the law. The pre-eminence and authority of the apostles in the Church are thus finally and strongly expressed. They are next to Christ, and he instructs and governs the Church through them.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.—The figure is still continued. *To judge* is here, not to condemn, but to have authority; to preside over, or rule. Thus, "Jephthah *judged* Israel six years," Judges xii, 7; for κρινω answers to the Hebrew שָׁפַט, which often signifies to govern; and hence the judges who succeeded Joshua are called שֹׁפְטִים. *The twelve tribes of Israel* are mentioned here and in other places of the New Testament, because, though the ten tribes which were carried away by Shalmanezer never returned in a body, yet many of each tribe remained in the land, and many more returned at different times; so that, at and before the time of Christ, the twelve tribes were commonly spoken of. Thus Josephus says that six persons out of each of the twelve tribes were sent to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, to translate the Scriptures into Greek: so also in Acts xxvi, 7, St. Paul speaks in the familiar language of the day, when he says, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come;" and St. James' epistle is addressed "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad." There is no need, therefore, to look for a future restoration of the twelve tribes, in order to fix the time of which our Lord is speaking, because they were then existing in Judea, and the neighbouring countries, though mingled with each other, and without distinct governments or tribes. But these words, like the former, are figurative. The Christian Church is "the Israel of God," and every believer is a son of Abraham. From the first, the natural descendants of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob were invested with a typical character, and the grand antitype was the whole body of true believers, the spiritual seed of the spiritual Isaac. To have authority under Christ in this spiritual Church, to convey immediately from him its doctrines and laws, to regulate its discipline and its services, to encourage the humble spirits by promises, to direct the perplexed by counsel, to excite the languid by exhortation, to restrain the vicious by rebukes, to exhibit, as the motives to submission and obedience to Christ, all the hopes of heaven and all the terrors of future punishment, with an authority which they only possessed, and continue to possess to this day: these were to be the rewards of the fishermen and publicans of Galilee, who had left all to follow Christ. And who of mankind have been raised to equal honour and influence? Where are the men whose names are so venerable, and so often pronounced? Where the authority which is so often appealed to on all moral questions? Where the writings which lay such hold upon the consciences of men? And where the teachers who have trained up such a host of immortal beings to holiness here, and to a blissful immortality? And these their rewards will ever increase until all the world shall acknowledge them, under Christ, to be their infallible guides, and the rulers of a universal Church. It is no objection to this view of the subject, that but a few of the apostles continue to exert their influence in the Church as *writers:* the doctrine was that of all, though in particular modes taught by individuals: it was specially taught and inspired, and the illuminations of all compared together perfectly agreed; and so at first was collectively taught in the metropolis of Judea. All wrought miracles at Jerusalem, when they united together for its first propagation; for "many wonders and signs were done BY THE APOSTLES:" the large Church there, of between three and four thousand souls, the mother and patron of the rest, "continued in the APOSTLES' DOCTRINE;" regarding them, collectively, as infallible authority; and "the twelve" remained for a considerable time at Jerusalem, to settle any essential point of discipline and rule, and to be appealed to in matters of difficulty; and thus, as rulers of the spiritual Israel, they "sat upon their thrones" glorious in moral majesty, and mighty in influence, ordering that kingdom of their Lord which was to endure for ever. With respect to Judas, this reward might have been his but for his own fault. But he was known by our Lord, and excluded in his intention from this promise. He was not one who had left all to follow Christ; for he was "covetous," and fell by that sin. But our Lord speaks of the *twelve* collectively, to which number the eleven was raised by the election of Matthias, a disciple who, as well as the apostles, had "followed" Christ, and was one of those who, as St. Peter says, Acts i, 21, had "companied with them all

for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 [m] But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

[m] Matt. xx, 16; Mark x, 31; Luke xiii, 30.

the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us." The above is the primary meaning of this promise of Christ to his apostles. But that it has an ultimate reference to their reward in another life, is probable from the lofty terms made use of.—When the discourses of our Lord rise into this magnificence of diction, we shall almost uniformly discover that a latent meaning lies under the more immediate and obvious one. And every part of this promise has an easy application to the heavenly state. There the *παλιγγενεσια*, the *restoration*, of man is complete, both in his glorified body and soul; there the Son of man sits upon his glorious heavenly throne; there the Israel of God, represented by the twelve tribes, are glorified with him; and there the twelve apostles will have their pre-eminence of glory, and, as in heaven all is order, and rank rises above rank, probably, also, their pre-eminence of mild and directive authority.

Verse 29. *And every one that hath forsaken.*—This is a general promise, not confined to the apostles; and refers to those times of persecution and distress which our Lord foresaw would invade his Church and put many of his followers to the severe test of forsaking or giving up, not only fishing boats and fishing nets, not only such possessions as the young ruler refused to part with, but, what would prove an infinitely severer trial to flesh and blood, their tenderest relations, through banishment, imprisonment, or death.

A *hundredfold.*—St. Mark adds, "now in this time with persecutions," which shows that our Lord meant the hundredfold reward of the present life to be taken spiritually. This consists in the Divine favour, in peace of mind, in those consolations and that intimate "communion of the Holy Ghost," with which Christ's suffering servants are so uniformly favoured; and, says an ancient writer, "that inward savour and relish, which every man is sensible of that relinquishes any thing for the glory of God, is a hundredfold more valuable and excellent than any enjoyment which could have risen from the possession of the thing itself." But the future reward is more than "a hundredfold," and is emphatically expressed by EVERLASTING LIFE.

Verse 30. *But many that are first shall be last.*—This verse, it is generally thought, belongs to the next chapter, in the first verse of which the particle *γαρ* shows the connection. It is a *γνωμη*, or adagial sentence, which the parable that follows was designed to illustrate; but still growing out of what preceded, as appears from its being connected with it by St. Mark, and then rising to what was of still more general application, as the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. Persons the most hopeful to human eye, like the young ruler, and who may be called *first*, are often *last*; and those who, like the publicans and sinners of Judea, appear farthest from embracing a religion of truth and purity, often most readily accept it; and this naturally brings in the calling of the Gentile world, who were always associated by the Jews with publicans and other detested characters. Still, in St. Mark, we find it connected with the preceding verses, intimating that, as to faithful endurance of suffering for the cause of Christ, many would be last who appeared first from their boldness and decision.

CHAPTER XX.

1 Christ, by the similitude of the labourers in the vineyard, showeth that God is debtor unto no man: 17 foretelleth his passion: 20 by answering the mother of Zebedee's children teacheth his disciples to be lowly: 30 and giveth two blind men their sight.

1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

CHAPTER XX. Verse 1. *For the kingdom of heaven is like, &c.*—That shall take place under the Gospel dispensation, which may be said to resemble the conduct of a certain *man, the master of a family*, *ανθρωπω οικοδεσποτη*.

Early in the morning.—*Αμα πρωι*, for *αμα συν τω πρωι, with* the morning; that is, at daybreak, which with the Jews was about six o'clock, and was called the first hour.

Verse 2. *For a penny a day.*—The Roman *denarius*, or about seven pence halfpenny, of our money. This was the usual rate of wages among the Romans, as appears from Tacitus, "*denarius, diurnum stipendium.*"

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a *penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place,

4 And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right *that* shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the good man of the house,

12 Saying, These last †have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 [a] So the last shall be first, and the

* The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce; which, after five shillings the ounce, is sevenpence halfpenny. † Or, *have continued one hour only.*—[a] Matt. xix, 30.

Verse 3. *About the third hour.*—Or nine o'clock; when he saw others standing *idle*, that is, unemployed, because not hired, *in the market place*, αγορα, where it was the custom for the labourers who wanted employment to assemble. And as it was the custom for the Jews often to hire day by day, and sometimes for a few hours only of a day, this was their daily place of resort at different hours.

Verse 4. *Whatsoever is right.*—According to the number of hours they had to labour before the day should terminate. He promised only this just proportion of wages, though he might from his bounty give more.

Verse 5. *The sixth and ninth hour.*—Twelve and three in the afternoon; consequently, the eleventh hour mentioned in the next verse was five in the afternoon, and they who were then hired would have to toil but one hour, till six o'clock, at which time the day closed. To these also he promises to give whatsoever is *right*, that is, an hour's wages for the hour's work.

Verse 8. *His steward.*—Τω επιτροπω, to his *agent* or *manager*.

Verse 9. *Every man a penny.*—All the labourers hired at the eleventh hour received the regular wages of a day, though they had *wrought but one hour*, and this contrary to the practice; for, as stated above, the rules of hiring and paying labourers among the Jews were very exact and minute, as appears from a tract of Maimonides, written on that subject, and it was the custom to hire by the hour as well as by the day.

Verse 10. *They supposed that they should have received more.*—The unexpected and unusual liberality of the master to those who had laboured but one hour, led those who had completed a full day's toil to expect that they should receive in full proportion to this liberality; but they received the day's wages at the usual and stipulated rate only; each a denarius.

Verse 12. *These last have wrought but one hour.*—Wetstein observes that they do not say ειργασανΤο, but εποιησαν, speaking slightingly of the work which they had done; but in the Septuagint, Ruth ii, 19, we have *που εποιησας*, "Where hast thou wrought?" Ποιειν, joined with words denoting time, signifies also *to stay* or *spend*; and so the words may be rendered, *have spent but one hour*.

Burden and heat.—The burden of the labour, and the heat of the sun, which, through a great part of the day in Palestine, is very oppressive.

Verse 15. *Is thine eye evil?*—An evil eye is a Hebrew expression for envy, and has a tacit allusion to that peculiar expression of the eye by which that affection betrays itself. This is also intimated in the Latin term *invidia*.

Because I am good.—Αγαθος is here used in the sense of *bountiful* or liberal. In Ecclesiasticus xxxv, 8, we have "a good eye" in the sense of *liberality*.

Verse 16. *So the last shall be first, and the first last.*—Here the γνωμη or proverbial sentence is repeated from the beginning,

first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

17 ¶ [b]And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem;

[b] Mark x, 32; Luke xviii, 31.

to show what the parable was especially designed to illustrate; and to this is added a second, used on other occasions by our Lord, *for many are called, but few chosen;* which, as we shall shortly see, relates rather to the general conclusion of the parable, than to the parable itself; for the elucidation of which the following remarks may be offered.

1. Like all other parables, it is to be interpreted by its general design, and not resolved into allegory, thereby giving a spiritual meaning to every particular. This has been done by several commentators, with great though perverted ingenuity, and with as little judgment. With them, the vineyard is the Church; the master, Christ; the labourers, ministers; the vines, the plants of righteousness; the market place, the world, where, before their conversion, God's elect idle about amid its pomps and vanities; with many other puerilities which dissipate the sense, and destroy the dignity of holy writ.

2. The great points of the parable are, the *fidelity* of God in his dealings with all his servants,—he gives to every one what is *right* under the *agreement* or covenant promises he has made with them; the exercise of a free and sovereign grace grounded upon his own right to administer his bounty as he pleases, beyond what he has engaged himself to do by promise; the actual exemplification of this, in cases to which he refers; and the unreasonable murmuring excited among others by his *goodness*.

3. What the cases were to which the parable was designed to apply, may be discovered by inquiring who they were that, being considered *last*, were actually made *first* in "the kingdom of heaven," of the administration of which he had been speaking. These were the apostles themselves; who, though inferior to the learned scribes and priests among the Jews; yet, by being chosen to the high honour of ruling in Messiah's Church, and being constituted its only authorized teachers, were by the special grace of Christ made *first*. Then there were the publicans and sinners, who, being penitent, received forgiveness of sins, and had a fulness of grace and favour bestowed upon them, in the experience of which men of long continued and rigid virtue among the Jews did not exceed, even when they came in upon the call of the Gospel; for many of the priests, and some of the Pharisees, ultimately believed in Christ; but we find no intimation of a greater abundance of spiritual gifts and graces being showered upon such men as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and others of the same respectable and virtuous character, who subsequently received Christianity, and who, probably, long before they were acquainted with Christ and his Gospel, had been serving God in all sincerity. Lastly, and chiefly, the Gentiles were referred to. These were to be brought into the Church, and made "fellow heirs," being placed on a perfect equality with Jewish believers, as to the privileges and the spiritual blessings of the Gospel; so that there should be "no difference:" and to this several of the parables of our Lord look forward, his design being to prepare his apostles for it, and gradually to undermine those Jewish prejudices against it which still held possession of their hearts. These Gentiles were *last* in general estimation, and in their destitution of instruction, and yet they became *first;* the Gentile Church, in fact, ultimately superseding not only the Jewish Church as it existed under the law, but the Churches of Jewish Christians, who, in a short time after the destruction of the Jewish polity, became extinct by absorption into the Gentile Churches.

4. To all these cases the parable applies in the most natural and striking manner. The more respectable in rank, and the more learned in the law, who might then or afterward believe in Christ, had what was *right*, that which the covenant of grace had stipulated to bestow upon believers of every class; but to be made apostles and ministers was not a matter of promise or stipulation, and though some of them might have been labouring long and usefully in the service of religion without mixing their doctrines with the corruptions of other teachers, they had no claim to it. This was a matter of grace, and Christ bestowed it upon the fishermen and publicans of Galilee according to the counsel of his own will. Some virtuous Jews, also, who had served God "in all good conscience," believed in Christ, discovering the defects of their righteousness, and looking for salvation from him; and these received what the promise of his mercy had stipulated: but those whose more notorious offences had been repented of, and forgiven by the compassion of our Lord, received also the same salvation in all its fulness through faith: and if there was in this case a total oblivion of their former foul offences, so that they were treated on an equality with others, this also was a matter of grace, which implied no injustice done to the rest. Then, as to the Gentiles, though the believing Jews might naturally suppose that in consideration of their nation

and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19 [c] And shall deliver him to the Gen-

[c] St. John, chap. xviii, 32.

having been for ages the acknowledged Church of God, and the instrument of upholding truth and piety in the world, after the Gentile nations had departed from it, they ought to have eminence and distinction in the Church which Christ was about to set up, although other people might be called into it; yet they had no reason to murmur at God's goodness to the Gentiles, in making them equal, and in some respects superior. The grace of the Gospel in all its fulness, as promised, was granted to them; there was in the case no breach of the covenant stipulation, but there was nothing in that to prevent the exuberant goodness of God from flowing forth to the Gentiles also. And if, in process of time, he should even make the Gentile Churches *first* in that instrumentality by which the world was to be illuminated and converted, this was a pure matter of grace and sovereign appointment not to be envied, but acquiesced in and adored.

With respect to the second moral attached to the parable, "for many are called but few chosen;" it is manifestly supplementary to the first or leading one, "so the last shall be first, and the first last;" which will account for its little apparent relevancy to the structure of the parable itself. This apparent want of connection led Bishop Pearce to consider it an interpolation from a subsequent chapter. But the great mass of the MSS., and those of the highest authority, all indeed but *two*, are opposed to this conjecture, which could never have been indulged if the true sense of the parable itself had not escaped that writer. When that is understood, the connection is traced without difficulty. It contains an incidental lesson arising, as above remarked, not directly out of the parable, but from its conclusion, which relates principally to the calling of all men, whether the publicans and sinners of Judea, or "sinners of the Gentiles," to the full participation of the grace of the Gospel. But the persons thus called to this grace are not left without admonition. If murmuring was to be silenced on one part, presumption was to be rebuked on the other. The "called," however great their privileges, would not in every case be "the chosen;" nay, the latter would be few in comparison with the former, as the final account would declare. For that our Lord refers to the day of judgment, appears from chapter xxii, 14, where these very words occur as the admonitory moral of the parable of the man that had not the wedding garment. Notwithstanding, therefore, that all men, however sinful, and even the Gentiles themselves, would be called to an equal participation with the devout Jews in the benefits of Messiah's kingdom, yet their actual salvation would not follow from that alone. The full submission of their hearts to Christ, the full acceptance of his offered grace, and perseverance in it when received, were all necessary to final salvation. Many in the day of account would be found wanting, and thus in another sense would the words be fulfilled among the Gentiles themselves, raised to these privileges; many of them thus constituted *first* would be *last*, and be utterly excluded from the kingdom of God. The custom upon which this proverbial expression was founded, is probably that of selecting from the mass of the Israelites, all of whom were enrolled to bear arms, those most fit for military service. All were called, but the most fit chosen. The expressions therefore of "chosen men," and "choosing out men," for warlike expeditions, frequently occur in the Old Testament. The Romans had similar regulations in their levies; but it is utterly improbable that the allusion made use of by our Lord was Roman, when the Old Testament made their own ancient practice so familiar to the Jews.

Other interpretations of this parable have been given, of which it is only necessary to notice three. The first is that of several of the fathers, who carry up the different times at which the labourers were called to the most ancient periods of the world. Thus Jerome, *Hic non unius temporis, et unius ætatis homines describuntur, &c.*—"Here we have not the description of the men of one time, but of mankind, from the beginning to the end of the world. Abel and Seth were called at the first hour; Enoch and Noah, at the third; at the sixth, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; at the ninth, Moses and the prophets; at the eleventh, the Gentiles." In refutation of this, it is enough to say, that the transaction described in the Gospel is said to take place under the administration of "the kingdom of heaven." Whitby makes the first hour the commencement of our Lord's ministry; the third, the first mission of the apostles to the cities of Israel; the sixth and ninth, their preaching to the Jews after the descent of the Holy Ghost; the eleventh the calling of the Gentiles. But these distinctions serve nothing for the illustration of the parable, the stress of the doctrine of which does not rest upon these particulars, and they suppose a meaning in its minuter parts which does not appear to have been intended. A third and more common opinion is, that the parable relates to the different periods in life in which men are converted to God, and embrace the Gospel in truth. But this is so

tiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

20 ¶ [d] Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt

[d] St. Mark, chap. x, 35.

foreign from the connection in which the parable stands, and the circumstances of those to whom it was addressed, that such an interpretation cannot be admitted. One part of its moral may indeed be applicable to those who from their youth have followed Christ, and may be tempted to hesitate, if not to murmur, at the great and distinguished grace sometimes showed at a late period, even the eleventh hour, to those who through a great part of life have lived in a state of alienation from God. They may be taught that grace is in its nature FREE, and that God can do what he will with his own; and that while he makes good his promises to them, he does them no injury by magnifying the exceeding riches of his grace to others. Still, though this lesson is deducible from the parable, and applicable to this and similar cases, the parable itself had no respect in its primary sense to such cases.

It may finally be remarked that this parable of our Lord appears in a different dress in the Talmud. "To what was R. Bon Bar Chaija like? To a king who hired many labourers; among whom there was one hired who performed his work extraordinarily well. What did the king? He took him aside, and walked with him to and fro: and when even was come the labourers came that they might receive their hire; and he gave him a complete hire with the rest. And the labourers murmured, saying, 'We have laboured hard all the day, and this man only two hours, yet he has received as much wages as we.' The king saith to them, 'He hath laboured more in those two hours than you in the whole day.' So R. Bon plied the law more in eight and twenty years than another in a hundred years." This puerile version of the noble parable of our Lord is here introduced, because it has been quoted in favour of the absurd theory held by some learned men, that our Lord often borrowed his observations and parables from the Jewish rabbins. Yet this Talmudical parable was not written till several hundred years after our Lord's days, and bears upon it the most obvious character of plagiarism from the New Testament, but debased and spoiled by being accommodated to the poor style and feeble thoughts of some rabbinical doctor. It is, however, curious that the Jew has given precisely the same turn to the parable as some modern commentators, who make the reward to the labourers at the eleventh hour to rest upon the merit of their superior diligence, and the better spirit in which they engaged in their short service. So easily does Pharisaism invade both Jew and Gentile, and so difficult is it for man to submit to be dealt with in the way of pure grace and mercy.

Verse 17. *Going up to Jerusalem, &c.*— This was the last time of his going to this city; and St. Mark adds that the disciples "were amazed, and as they followed were afraid:" *amazed* at his boldness in going up again to Jerusalem, where the rage of the chief priests and rulers they knew was so extreme against him; and *afraid* of the consequences both to him and to themselves. Our Lord therefore takes the *twelve apart* from the other disciples, to show them that their fears were not groundless, and to point out to them that thus "all things written by the prophets concerning the Son of man should be accomplished," Luke xviii, 31. The whole discourse is minutely prophetic, and shows that the scene of his sufferings was constantly, and in all its humiliations and most painful details, before his eyes. What stronger proof can we have that the death of Christ was voluntary? and if voluntary, it was then vicarious. How many particulars are here predicted! 1. That he should be *betrayed*; 2. Into *the hands*, not of the Roman governor, but of *the chief priests and scribes*, composing the great council; 3. That they should *condemn him to death*, under their law, as a blasphemer; yet, 4. That they should not stone him which was the Mosaic punishment, but should deliver him to *the Gentiles*, the Romans, *to mock*, and *to scourge*, and "to spit upon," Mark x, 33, and *to crucify*, all which circumstances were most accurately fulfilled; 5. That on *the third day* he should *rise again*. St. Luke adds that "they understood none of these things; and this saying was hidden from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." They knew the meaning of the words, but probably thought that he was speaking in a kind of parable, and that the expressions carried with them a secret mystical meaning, to which as yet they had not the key. They apprehended, it is true, a powerful opposition, and great danger, but might suppose that this, when permitted to a certain extent, would only give occasion to their Master to display his power and to destroy his enemies. Yet they seem to have been agitated by very opposite feelings and views, rapidly succeeding each other, and producing both hope and fear; and in this state of mind were utterly disqualified to pay such an attention to the words of Christ as might have led to a clearer com-

thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand and on my

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prehension of his meaning, though he now only repeated what he had several times stated before, on the subject of his death, in the plainest terms. Still, however, in this perplexed state of mind they continued to follow him even to Jerusalem, and thereby proved the sincerity of their faith, and the strength of their honest and ardent attachment. The moral strength of the apostles is exhibited, perhaps the more forcibly, by that very infirmity of judgment which they displayed whenever the death of their Master was alluded to.

Verse 20. *The mother of Zebedee's children.*—Her name was Salome; and as her husband does not appear to have been a follower of Christ, she has been supposed to be a widow. Her sons were James and John, already two of the most favoured disciples, which might have emboldened the request. The mother alone has been censured for this ambition; but by referring to the account in Mark, her sons were as much engaged in the affair as herself, for it is there stated that they made the petition; meaning that they made it through their mother. This request Grotius naturally conjectures arose out of the promise just made to the apostles, of sitting on twelve thrones; and it may be added that as the imagery in that passage is taken from the sanhedrim, the request had the same reference; for on the right hand of the Nase, or president of the sanhedrim, sat the Ab Bethdin, or father of the court, and on the left the Hacam or sage. There was nothing therefore in the request of the sons of Zebedee inconsistent, in their view, with the general promise that the twelve apostles should sit upon twelve thrones; but they desired the two most elevated places, the two offices under Christ of the greatest dignity. The request proceeded from a criminal ambition.

Verse 22. *Ye know not what ye ask.*—This not only reproves the request itself, but intimates that they were ignorant of the true nature of his kingdom, where the highest eminence was that of the severest labours and the most painful sufferings. Christ himself obtained not his crown by wars and victories, but by shame and death.

To drink of my cup.—It was anciently the custom, at great entertainments, for the governor of the feast to appoint to each of his guests the kind and proportion of wine which they were to drink, and to assign to every one his cup. Hence, both in sacred and profane writers the *cup* is metaphorically used for the portion of good or evil that befalls men in life; but is more frequently used to express an evil or afflictive lot. The allusion in some passages appears to be to the impoisoned cup given to malefactors. "Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished? Thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it," Jer. xlix, 12. "O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury, thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out," Isaiah li, 17.

Baptized with the baptism, &c.—The being immersed and overwhelmed with waters is a frequent metaphor, in all languages, to express the rush of successive troubles.—This repetition of the same term is not peculiar to the Hebrew style, but is found also in the ancient Greek writers. Griesbach leaves out this clause respecting baptism from his text; but it is found in the greater number of MSS., and not only coincides with the context, but is found in the parallel place, Mark x, 38, where he retains it.

We are able.—How rashly this was said appears from the sequel, when they all forsook him and fled.

Verse 23. *Ye shall indeed drink, &c.*—Both were to endure afflictions for the truth's sake, and thus to drink of the same cup and be baptized with the same baptism, though in a lower measure; for the sufferings of Christ were in themselves, as in their design, peculiar to himself. They drank of the same cup, but he drained its bitterness. James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod; and John, beside the ordinary persecutions which he endured with his brethren, was banished into Patmos.

It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them *for whom it is prepared of my Father.*—The words "it shall be given," are not in the Greek, and have been unhappily supplied by our translators, as though there had been an ellipsis. But *ουκ εστιν εμον δουναι, αλλ' οις ητοιμασται υπο του πατρος μου*, is to be rendered, *is not mine to give, except to them for whom it is prepared by my Father; αλλα, but*, being used for *ει μη, except*. Thus *ει μη*, in Matthew xvii, 8, is expressed by *αλλα* in the parallel place, Mark ix, 8: "they saw no man," *αλλα*, "save," except Jesus only. It is worthy

left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, [e] Ye know that the princes of

[e] St. Luke, chap. xx, 25.

remark, that in few of our English translations of the Bible, before that of King James, are there any supplied words. The Bishops' Bible has, "is not mine to give but to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."—Thus the meaning is obvious; the passage neither states that the Son had no power to dispose of the honours of his own kingdom, nor that eternal glory is to be given only to the elect, chosen by the Father in Christ from the foundation of the world; but simply that Christ had no power, as Salome and her sons supposed, to grant the honours of his kingdom on the principle of favouritism, or from the interest which Salome might have in his regards from her assiduous attendance upon him, and ministering to him, or from the affection which might be thought to arise from the natural relationship between him and James and John, who are called the brothers of our Lord; but that he administers all the affairs of his kingdom, and assigns its offices and rewards, in perfect conformity to the will and counsels of the Father. Between the persons of the ever blessed Trinity there is a perfect consent, and the laws by which they will distribute the rewards of heaven are revealed. For it is to the final honours of eternity that our Lord must be considered as referring; since we know the fact that no superiority of one or a few was established among the apostles on earth.—But at his second coming he will reward every man according as his work shall be. The highest dignities are therefore *prepared* for those who are by holiness, zeal, and labour, best prepared for them. Thus is both the favouritism of earthly attachments, which might be supposed to exist between our Lord and Salome and her sons, and that which is supposed to arise from an eternal election of persons to eternal glory, equally shut out. The rule of distribution is fixed: he that by diligent "occupation" of his Lord's goods makes his five "pounds gain ten pounds," shall have "authority over ten cities."

Verse 24. *Were moved with indignation.*—St. Mark says, "were much displeased," a strong emotion of anger having been excited in their minds; which our Lord calmly and with impressive dignity restrains by *calling them unto him*, and teaching them all a lesson of the deepest wisdom as well as piety, and which, if observed, would banish all ambition and all contentions from among the disciples of Christ for ever.

Verse 25. *Exercise dominion over them, &c.*—This passage sufficiently shows that Christ's "kingdom is not of this world;" that is, it is not conformed, either in its SPIRIT, END, or FORM, to the civil governments established among men. It does not, however, follow from these words, that his Church is without government, or that it has not officers who are commissioned by him to bear rule. This conclusion would be contrary to his own act; for he gave "thrones" to his apostles, and appointed them to "judge," govern, preside over "the twelve tribes" of the spiritual Israel. See note chap. xix, 28. They too appointed presbyters or elders, to teach and enforce the laws of Christ in the Church, to "reprove the unruly," and to reject obstinate offenders from the communion of saints. The meaning must therefore be collected from the occasion; and as it is clear that the request of the sons of Zebedee arose out of the notion, more or less still retained by all the apostles, that the kingdom of Christ, however spiritual in some respects it might be, yet, nevertheless, was to be embodied in the form of a civil government over the Jewish nation, so that it should regain its independence, and be ranked again among the kingdoms of the world; our Lord's words oppose this earthly notion, by declaring that in his kingdom there should be no such dominion or authority as the princes and great men, the *αρχοντες*, and the *μεγαλοι*, of the Gentiles, the splendour and power of whose governments they envied, exercised among their subjects. Those who take the compound verbs, *κακακυριευω*, and *τετεξουσιάζω*, to have more force than the same verbs in their simple form, suppose them to indicate the tyrannical and arbitrary power which the Gentile rulers usually exercised; but they do not seem to have considered that the fair inference from this would be, that the same KIND of dominion and authority might, for any thing our Lord says to the contrary, be set up in the Christian Church, provided it were not carried to the extent of severity; in other words, that the same kind of coercion and compulsion might be applied to spiritual matters as to those of civil life.—But the fact is, not only that these verbs, in their compound form, are frequently used in no stronger sense than when simple; but that St. Luke, in the parallel place, Luke xxii, 25, uses them only in the simple form to express the very same thing, which is decisive of the question. It is not, therefore, merely the DEGREE but the KIND of dominion

the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came [f] not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

[f] Philippians, chap. ii, 7.

exercised by the princes of the Gentiles in their kingdoms, which our Lord excludes from his Church. And when it is considered that the government which Christ and his apostles have established in the Church is wholly adapted to it as a spiritual society, and consists,—1. In direction; 2. In brotherly reproof when a fault has been committed; 3. In faithful but patient admonition when it is persisted in; and, 4. In exclusion from the table of the Lord, the visible sign of communion, but with no infliction of civil disabilities or penalties;—nothing is more different in kind than this species of government from that exercised in a civil community, and which in its mildest form must accomplish its ends by the threat or by the actual infliction of fines, imprisonments, or corporal chastisement. By virtue of this power operating upon the fears of men, civil rulers acquire authority, and effect the ends of the institution of civil government. *But it shall not be so among you;* you are to obtain authority in the Churches, and to effect the ends of their institution, by MORAL influence: *whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister*, διακονος, *coadjutor or helper; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant*, δουλος, or, as St. Mark expresses it, "servant of all." In this passage our Lord, according to the style frequently used by the Hebrews, expresses himself in parallelisms, where the second clause is exegetical of the preceding one, with which it corresponds, and expresses the idea with greater force.

Verse 28. *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto*, &c.—Ωσπερ, *in the same manner as*, the Son of man came not into the world to exercise power and dominion; to rule over men and to be served by them; but by laborious and unintermitted application, by "going about doing good," to serve and benefit them.

And to give his life a ransom for many.—The doctrine of the atonement, the great foundation and top stone of the Christian system, is here most clearly laid down. That which was given by Christ was his *life*, upon that great principle which runs through all the dispensations of revealed religion, that, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission: that which man had forfeited by his sin was *life;* "for the wages of sin is *death;*" and that which alone could free him from this penalty was the substitution of a NOBLER LIFE in place of his own, to which all the sacrifices of animal life under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations looked forward as instituted types. Christ is said to GIVE his life; which not only intimates that his sufferings and death were voluntarily undergone, but that he had a power over the disposal of his life which no merely human being is invested with. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again," are words which no man but our Lord ever used; and they prove that his humanity was impersonated in a higher nature, possessing a sovereign authority, and having life and death at command. The precise nature of the act by which Christ, who might have prevented it, submitted to die, is expressed by the term λυτρον, *a ransom*, or price of redemption, whether from death, captivity, or any other state of misery. In the Septuagint it generally corresponds with the Hebrew כפר, which signifies a piacular sacrifice; in which sense it, or some word derived from it, is constantly used in the New Testament with reference to the death of Christ. "In whom we have *redemption*, την απολυτρωσιν, *through his blood*," Eph. i, 7. "Ye were not redeemed, ελυτρωθητε, with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a LAMB without blemish and without spot." Thus that deliverance of man from sin, misery, and all other consequences of his apostacy from God, which constitutes our redemption by Christ, is not granted without a consideration as an act of mere prerogative. The *ransom*, the redemption price, was exacted and paid; one thing was given for another,—"the precious blood" of Christ, "as of a *lamb*," that is to say sacrificially offered for captive and condemned men. In this manner, "he gave himself a ransom, αντιλυτρον, for all," so that there is no farther satisfaction or price to be paid by any.

For many.—Here αντι signifies not merely for the benefit of many, but in their stead, in their place, which is the strong and original sense of this preposition, as in the following passages:—2 Sam. xviii, 33, "Would to God I had died, αντι σου, *for thee*," in thy stead. "Archelaus did reign in Judea, αντι, *in the room of*, his father Herod." "If he

29 § And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

§ Mark x, 46; Luke xviii, 35.

ask a fish, will he, *αντι*, for a fish, in place or instead of a fish, give him a serpent?" But because *πολλων* is here used without the article, it has been argued that the sense is, that Christ gave his life a ransom instead of *many ransoms*, that is, instead of the numerous and frequently repeated oblations of the Mosaic law. But however true it is, that the one sacrifice of Christ took the place of the many typical sacrifices previously instituted, this important doctrine is nowhere expressed in such terms as occur in the text, which by a Jew accustomed to sacrificial phrases would be understood to enunciate the unmeaning proposition, that the death of Christ was a price paid to redeem the sacrifices of the law! Besides, in the sense of abolishing the Mosaic sacrifices, the words are broken off from the scope and intent of the passage, which is to show that Christ not only came to minister to others, but to do even more than this for others, namely, to give his life for them. Nor is there any weight in the argument from the absence of the article; still *persons*, not *things*, are intended, as in chap. xxvi, 28, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, *περι πολλων*, for the remission of sins." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins, *πολλων*, of many," Heb. ix, 28. Some, however, who admit that the text signifies that the Son of man gave his life a ransom for many *persons*, deny that *πολλοι*, without the article, is equivalent to *παντες*, *all*, though they acknowledge that *οι πολλοι* has that import; while others again contend that neither with nor without the article is it to be taken in that extensive sense. In answer to the first it may be observed, that the text before us, and 1 Tim. ii, 6, are in their sense strictly correspondent, and that, in the latter, the apostle declares that Christ "gave himself *αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων*, a ransom for all," thereby showing that he understood *πολλοι*, as used by the evangelist, to be fully equivalent to *παντες*. In like manner, in the Septuagint version of Daniel xii, 2, *πολλοι* without the article is used for *all mankind*: "And many, *πολλοι*, of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." With respect to those who deny that *οι πολλοι* ever signifies *all mankind*, it is sufficient to quote Romans v, 19: "For as by one man's disobedience *many*, *οι πολλοι*, were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many, *οι πολλοι*, be made righteous." The text, therefore, not only expressly lays down the doctrine of the atonement, but extends its intent and design to all mankind.

Verse 29. *And as they departed from Jericho.*—St. Mark says, "As he went out from Jericho;" but St. Luke, according to our translation, "As he was come nigh to Jericho." This apparent discrepancy altogether arises from a wrong rendering of *εν τω εγγιζειν*, which ought to be translated indefinitely, *while he was near*, that is, before he had gone far from the city.

Verse 30. *Two blind men.*—The evangelists Mark and Luke mention but one, whom the former calls, "Bartimeus, the son of Timeus;" and as the name is particularly mentioned, we may conclude that, either from his family or some other circumstance, he was a well known character, which may account for his case only being noticed. He was also, probably, the speaker both for himself and companion.

Verse 31. *And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace.*—This is both an awkward and an obscure rendering. *Επετιμησεν αυτοις* ought to be rendered, *charged them*, and *ινα*, not *because* but *that*. The parallel place, Mark x, 48, is, "Many charged him that he should hold his peace."

These blind men, having heard of his character and works, believed him to be the Messiah, and therefore address him as "the Son of David," the common title of the Messiah among the Jews; they earnestly implore his mercy; and, though charged by the multitude to hold their peace, as thinking perhaps they were clamouring for alms, they cry out the more. Our Lord at first appears not to regard them, intending to try their faith, and pursues his way; but at length he stood still, and granted their request, thereby

encouraging, as in other instances, importunate and persevering prayer. Mr. Baxter here remarks, "Bodily calamities are easily felt, and bodily welfare easily desired; but though Christ most values those who prefer spiritual mercies, yet he hath compassion also on men's bodies, as serviceable to their souls, and to his glory."

CHAPTER XXI.

1 Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass, 12 driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple, 17 curseth the fig tree, 23 putteth to silence the priests and elders, 28 and rebuketh them by the similitude of the two sons, 35 and the husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them.

1 AND [a] when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any *man* say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be

[a] Mark xi, 1; Luke xix, 29.

CHAPTER XXI. Verse 1. *And were come to Bethphage.*—St. Mark and St. Luke say, "Bethphage and Bethany;" the confines of these districts adjoining each other, Bethphage being between Bethany and Jerusalem, but near the latter, the village being within sight of the walls. Bethany was two miles distant from Jerusalem, and the mount of Olives one. This eminence was so called from the number of olive trees which grew upon it. A few trees of this kind still remain scattered through this district.

Verse 2. *The village over against you.*—This village is supposed by some to be Nob, distant about two miles.

An ass tied, and a colt with her.—The ancient judges and kings of Israel rode upon asses; horses, as well as chariots of war, being forbidden; so that when Solomon and his successors multiplied horses, they were rebuked for it by the prophets. The leading reasons of this prohibition appear to have been, 1. That they should not be tempted by a cavalry force to invade other nations, either for predatory purposes, or for conquest, but be content with their own land assigned by God; and, 2. That they might trust in God to give them the victory against all invaders by means of their own peasant infantry alone; and so the prohibition reminded them always of God's promises, and of their dependence. Solomon and succeeding kings violated this rule, and were often sharply reproved for it by the prophets. They affected horses both for war and for state and show, the horse being a nobler animal than the ass or mule; and our Lord's making his royal entry into Jerusalem on an ass is therefore noted by the Prophet Zechariah as a mark of his lowliness; for though in ancient times the princes of Israel made use of asses, that custom had long ceased.

The ass and the colt were both brought to our Lord; but he rode only on the latter. The other evangelists add, "On which never man had sat." It had never been used for common purposes, and was appropriated to a sacred one. As the colt only was needed, though the ass followed by natural instinct, St. Mark and St. Luke mention the colt only.

Verse 3. *The Lord hath need of them.*—Probably nothing more is here intended by "the Lord," than *our Master*, answering to the Hebrew רב. Christ, who knew that an ass and colt would be found by his disciples in such a place, doubtless knew also that the owner of them was so well acquainted with his character, and was so well affected toward him, that he would grant the loan of his beasts as soon as the disciples should declare for whose use they were intended.

Verse 4. *All this was done that it might be fulfilled, &c.*—The end of the action was not merely or chiefly to fulfil the prophecy, but the prophecy was uttered with reference to it, and was fulfilled by it, while the action itself rested upon other reasons. These appear to have been, 1. To assert his majesty, as in truth the King Messiah, and yet still to show that his kingdom was not a civil one, by his taking no step to avail himself of the popular excitement to seize the reins of government; for after the events of this triumphal day he retired into the secrecy and solitude of the mount of Olives. 2. To give an opportunity to the people publicly to declare their belief that he was the Messias, the Son of David, of which they were now generally persuaded, although their views of the true character of the Messiah were confused and erring. 3. To profess more publicly than heretofore, and in the very metropolis of Judea, that he was that "King" of Zion of whom the Prophet Zecharias had spoken, as coming "riding upon the foal of an ass;" and thus to apply to himself a prophecy which

fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

[b] Isaiah lxii, 11; Zech. ix, 9; John xii, 15.

5 [b] Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek,

both ancient and modern Jewish commentators have referred to their Messiah, as Bochart has shown by several extracts. 4. To allow his followers to acknowledge him, by their acclamations, as the Messiah, in order to restrain the chief priests and Pharisees, by fear of the popular feeling in his favour, from an immediate attempt upon his life, and to gain time for the delivery of those important discourses, consisting of prophecies and rebukes, which for five successive days before his crucifixion he pronounced in the temple, while at night he retired to the mount of Olives.

The prophecy cited is from Zech. ix, 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass," or rather, "EVEN upon a colt, the foal of an ass," the last clause being an explanatory parallelism. The first clause mentions the species of beast, the second its age; and this greater particularity in the prophecy rendered the fulfilment the more striking. The evangelist has quoted rather the substance than the exact words of the prophecy; which, as writing for the Jews, was sufficient to refer them to their own Scriptures. Both St. Matthew and the Septuagint seem to have read עני, *meek*, instead of עני, *abased*, or *afflicted*, which is supported by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, who all explain it by ענוהן, *humble*, or *meek*. This prophecy is incapable of being applied to any other than Christ, even in a lower sense. Those who would refer it to Zerubbabel forget that it was written subsequent to his residence in Jerusalem; beside that, in no sense could he be called king who was but the deputy of a foreign power. Nehemiah was also appointed by Artaxerxes to be "governor," the viceroy, but not a king; and certainly, of neither of these, nor of Judas Maccabeus and his successors, could it be said that "he should speak peace to the heathen, and have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." On these grounds a few of the rabbins, who, to avoid the application of this prophecy to Jesus of Nazareth, pretended that it related not to the Messiah, but to one or other of the above persons, are stoutly opposed by others, who generally allow that to Messiah alone it can be consistently applied. Thus, Rabbi Solomon, upon Zech. ix, 9: "This place cannot be interpreted of any other, because it is said of him, 'And his dominion shall be from sea to sea.'" It looks directly to Christ, without the intervention of any other; and it may be asked of the Jews, what king of theirs ever came to Zion in the manner described by the prophet, save Jesus of Nazareth? Sion is put for Jerusalem; and both are personified, according to oriental custom, as a virgin, or "daughter."

This prophecy is quoted both by St. Matthew and St. John in brief, to direct attention to the whole section in which it stands, and which will be found richly charged with the most important views of the character of the Messiah, and the great results of his reign. There he is represented, amid all his lowliness, as "a King," "righteous," "having salvation," and so answering to Melchizedec, as "King of righteousness," and "King of peace," Heb. vii, 2. And as the prophecy proceeds it gives an important and most interesting reason why our Lord rode into his metropolis upon *an ass;* it was to declare that his kingdom was to be one of PEACE, not of WAR: "And I will cut off the CHARIOT from Ephraim, and the HORSE from Jerusalem;" both which the Jews were forbidden by the law to use, in order to take away the temptation to offensive wars, as above stated. "And the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak PEACE unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" and yet these extensive conquests were to be made without "chariots" of war, without battle "horses," or the "battle bow." So that the spiritual nature of Christ's reign could not be more strongly expressed; and that the prophecy was not so interpreted by the Jews is in proof that their earthly mindedness and ambition wholly blinded them to the meaning of their own Scriptures. Yet it is curious to observe that some of their more modern commentators come so much nearer to the truth. Rabbi Saadias Gaon, on Dan. vii, 13, says, "Is it not written in Zechariah, of Messiah, 'lowly and riding on an ass?' Shall he not rather come with humility, than with equipage and grandeur?" And David Kimchi, "He shall ride upon an ass, not through any want, because the whole world shall be under his dominion, but through his humility, and to acquaint the Jews that there was no farther need of horses and chariots; for the prophet adds, 'I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem.'" Here again the light of the Gospel could not be wholly excluded from these rabbins, who, in the controversy which had been excited with the Christians, were compelled, by the force of the prophecies brought against them, to admit an humbled as well as an exalted Messiah; only they either feigned two Messiahs, or took refuge

and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.

6 [c] And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

10 [d] And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

[c] Mark xi, 2.

[d] Mark xi, 15; Luke xix, 45; John ii, 13.

in the figment of the Messiah being for a long time hidden before he would manifest himself. These were not, however, the views of the Jewish doctors in the time of our Lord, who looked only for a sudden advent of Messiah in all his glory to set up his dominion among them. Nor does the prophecy terminate here. "Captives" are to be delivered; another work, would the Jews say, of a conquering Messiah; but they are to be delivered "by the blood of the covenant," not by arms. "As for thee, also, by the BLOOD OF THY COVENANT I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water;" and then, as "prisoners of hope," they are exhorted to turn to the "stronghold," the Zion, the city of God, and there to receive "the double," the abundance of all blessings. To show then to the Jews that he was the King Messiah, he made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem; but to show that he was that meek and peaceful king spoken of by Zechariah, he rode upon *the foal of an ass*, and thus turned their attention to a prophecy which, if they had closely examined it, would have dissipated all their carnal conceptions as to an earthly kingdom and a warlike Messiah.

Verse 7. *And put on them their clothes.*—Much unnecessary discussion has taken place among critics whether our Lord rode by turns both on the ass and the colt, which is most improbable; or how the clothes being laid as a saddle upon both, as stated by St. Matthew, is to be reconciled with the other evangelists, who say, "They cast their garments on the colt." It is easy to conceive that they at first put their garments upon each, as not knowing which of the animals he might choose to ride; or whether, if he continued a long time in the procession, both might not be wanted. This reconciles the accounts; for as he used the colt only, St. Mark and St. Luke are less minute than St. Matthew, who was an eye witness.

And they set him thereon.—Και επεκαθισαν επανω αυτων: "not," as Euthymius and Theophylact observe, "upon the two asses, but upon the garments."

Verse 8. *Spread their garments in the way, &c.*—When Jehu was proclaimed king, "they hasted and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king," 2 Kings ix, 13. The practice of strewing the way with garments, branches, and flowers, to do honour to great men, and especially princes, was common among many ancient nations. Plutarch mentions it as a circumstance of respect shown by the soldiers to Cato the younger, that they laid down their garments for him to tread upon. Herodian mentions the strewing of garlands and flowers when Commodus was joyfully received by the Romans; and Herodotus relates that the way was strewed with myrtle branches before Xerxes. The garments mentioned in the text were the upper or flowing robes worn by the Jews.

Verse 9. *Hosanna to the Son of David, &c.*—It was customary with the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, to carry about branches of palm and other trees in their hands, and to sing, "Hosanna, save now, I beseech thee," Psalm cxviii, 25. This custom they now adopted in honour of our Lord, as proclaiming him to be the great personage for whom they looked, the Messiah. Hosanna is an abbreviated form of the two words הושיעה, *save*, and נא, *now*; and, as here used, was equivalent to "God preserve the Son of David." *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, is taken from Psalm cxviii, 26. *Hosanna in the highest*, εν τοις υψιστοις, *in the highest* places, or heavens, is an address to God in favour of Messiah. Some, however, understand it, *in the highest degree*. The whole formed a scene of tumultuous joy, expressing the strongly excited feelings of the people, who poured out blessings upon the head of the long expected Messiah, and offered their most fervent wishes to God for his success, now they imagined he was about to claim the throne of his father David. The multitudes who on this occasion attended him had chiefly come up from the country, and do not appear to have been composed of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in any great numbers; for it is added, "*all the city*," the inhabitants of

12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13 And said unto them, It is written, [e] My house shall be called the house of prayer, [f] but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he

[e] Isaiah lvi, 7.

[f] Jer. vii, 11; Mark xi, 17; Luke xix, 46.

Jerusalem, "*were moved, saying, Who is this?*" as surprised by this unlooked-for triumphal procession, and not knowing for whose honour it was intended; and accordingly *the multitude*, those who attended Christ, answered, *This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.* Yet many went out from Jerusalem with palm branches in their hands, to join in the acclamations of those who had gone up with him from Jericho and other parts. These were doubtless those who believed on him in consequence of the discourses they had heard from him in Jerusalem on his former visit, and the miracles he had wrought, especially the raising of Lazarus at Bethany, the impression of which upon many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem must have been very great.

Verse 12. *Went into the temple.*—Εις το ιερον, which comprehends the whole building with its courts, as distinguished from the ναος or temple strictly so called, which included the sanctuary and the holy of holies, into which our Lord did not enter. From St. Mark we learn that when our Lord on this day entered the temple, he merely "looked round upon all things; and eventide being come, he went out to Bethany with the twelve." It was on the day following that he cast out the traders; which distinction of time St. Matthew, whose object was merely to relate the fact, does not notice; but he says nothing inconsistent with it. It was in the court of the Gentiles that frankincense, oil, wine, doves, lambs, and oxen were sold, after the victims had been examined and approved by the priests.

Money changers.—The κολλυβισται were persons who exchanged foreign for the current coin of Judea, or the contrary, to meet the convenience of those who came up to the feasts from distant countries. Hence they had their tables in this court, and, as the passover was now at hand, would be in the height of their unhallowed business, which ought to have been transacted in a less sacred place.

Them that sold doves.—Which, being the offerings of the poor, would, at so great a feast as that of the passover, be in considerable demand, from the concourse of those who reserved their offerings to this season. The practice of making the courts of the temple a place of traffic was probably introduced from the Greeks and Romans. It was evidently regarded by our Lord as a great abuse, under whatever pretence of affording facility to the performance of the appointed services of the temple it might be defended. The noise would disturb the more serious worshippers; and various cheats and impositions were practised, as we may gather from our Lord charging them with having made his house "a den of thieves." It would seem remarkable that this profanation was suffered by the priests, who were so scrupulous and exact in whatever appertained to the honour of their temple; but there has been, in all ages, great inconsistency among ceremonious formalists, and superstition and irreverence are often found together.

Verse 13. *It is written, My house, &c.*—This is quoted from Isaiah lvi, 7, "For mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." In referring to this prophecy our Lord not only reproves the profanity and wicked avarice which had made the house of prayer a bazaar or market house, but the contempt poured upon the pious Gentiles, or heathen proselytes, who had a right to worship there, and whose court they had invaded so as not only to occupy it with stalls for cattle, seats for them that sold doves, and the tables of money changers, but as to fill it with distracting noise and confusion, wholly subversive of its original and gracious intention. Instead of a place for offering up prayer by the pious "stranger," whom God had promised to make "joyful in his house of prayer," they had made it *a den of thieves*; an expression used probably in allusion to the rocky caves or dens in the mountainous parts of Judea, which were often the receptacles of robbers. Something of miraculous power must have attended this act of our Lord, to overawe the numerous and bold intruders into the court of the temple, and especially as he overthrew their tables and seats. Yet there was nothing in this act but what was consistent with the views which the Jews entertained of the Messiah, who, as they believed, would reform many abuses, and bring in many new laws with great authority. Hence, when on a former occasion he vindicated the honour of God's house, his disciples were reminded of the prophetic words, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, ε Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

ε Psalm viii, 2.

Verse 15. *The wonderful things that he did.*—Not referring so much to his healing the blind and the lame in the temple, for they could scarcely adapt their question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" to the working such cures; but what they wondered at was his public entry; his allowing the people to acclaim their hosannas to him as the Messiah; his acting in the temple as though it were his own house, which his words implied; and his expelling the traders with severity and authority. To this was added a scene which especially appears to have excited their malignant envy: the very children, allured probably by his mild dignity, or rather under the special influence of God, to make them witnesses of the truth, and thus to accomplish a prophecy, were surrounding him in the temple, and crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." *And they were sore displeased*, filled with indignation.

Verse 16. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, &c.*—This is from Psalm viii, 2. The Hebrew is, "Thou hast founded or constituted strength;" but the evangelist follows the Septuagint, *thou hast perfected* or ordained *praise;* the sense being equivalent. Their praises *strongly* and irresistibly declared the majesty and fame of God. These words are not introduced with the usual *formula*, "Now this was done that it might be fulfilled," or, "Thus was fulfilled," and therefore we are not obliged to consider them adduced as a prophecy accomplished by the event; and the argument of Christ with the Pharisees will be sufficiently conclusive without regarding them in this light. Still, even this passage is not an instance of accommodation, properly so called, which supposes no relation but that of a verbal similarity to the subject illustrated. The psalm from which they are taken celebrates the praises of God for our redemption, by Him who was made "a little," or for a little while, "lower than the angels," and then "crowned with glory and honour," having all things "put under his feet." This the Apostle Paul applies directly to Christ, and includes in it the wonderful exaltation of fallen human nature in him. The psalm is thus introduced, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth; who hast set thy glory above the heavens." But who acknowledges this glory of God in human redemption? Not the "enemies" mentioned in the next verse, but the "babes and sucklings" "out of whose mouth" God is said to have ordained "strength, because of his enemies, and to still the enemy and the avenger." Now, since this strength was ordained out of the *mouth*, it must be understood of the *strength of speech*, strength of doctrine, and strength of praise; which most fitly applies to the apostles and disciples of our Lord, who were, in the estimation of the world, weak and inefficient as babes and sucklings, and yet by their asserting the claims of Christ, and proclaiming his praises, they silenced his most potent enemies, making the glory of God in the redemption of mankind by his Son to fill the civilized world, and to be almost universally acknowledged. Thus by these weak instruments were those mighty results accomplished which brought so much glory to God, and so mightily confounded his "enemies." Now of this the praises of the little children in the temple were a beautiful type: Christ was first publicly acknowledged and publicly praised in his temple by children, and that to the confusion of his enemies, who were struck dumb themselves, but could not silence them; and there is nothing improbable in supposing that, as a fine emblem was thus exhibited of the manner in which the enemies of Christ would be "stilled" or silenced by that "strength" which God was about to ordain out of the mouths of the apostles, so this emblematical representation of a most interesting truth and important fact was not the result of accident, but of the overruling providence of God. For that there was something remarkable in the case, appears from the children not being mentioned as taking a part in the hosannas of the procession on the way to and through Jerusalem, but only in the temple, and that in the very presence of "the enemies," the chief priests and scribes; and also that then only their acclamations are mentioned, not those of any others. It would seem as if these children were collected there and moved upon by a supernatural impulse, to repeat the joyful songs and hosannas which had been sung by the multitude in the streets, and along the way to Jerusalem. And if so, we may conclude that this singular event, arranged by God to be an emblem of one much higher, even of that which should fully, and in the highest sense, accomplish the prophecy, was also referred to in this prophetic psalm itself, and was in its degree a direct accomplishment of it. It is no small confirmation of this view,—that the children in the temple publishing the claims and honours of Christ, were emblems of the apostles and the other disciples,—that Christ himself calls them

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 [h] And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if

[h] St. Mark, chap. xi, 13.

"babes," in contrast to the learned and influential of the world. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Verse 17. *And lodged there.*—Ηυλισθη, *he passed the night*, not in the village at the house of Lazarus, but probably *sub dio*, in the open air, among the olive trees, with which the district abounded; for it is added, "in the morning when he returned to the city he was hungry," which he could scarcely be in coming so short a distance as two miles from the house of Lazarus, had he been entertained there. Our blessed Lord chose this for the sake of solitude and prayer, knowing that "his hour" was approaching; and also no doubt to avoid suspicion, that it was plotting by night with his followers and the populace to seize the government. It was this circumstance, probably, which prevented the Roman governor from taking any alarm. All that Christ did was in the day and at night he departed from the city.

Verse 19. *A fig tree in the way.*—Συκην μιαν, *one fig tree*; so spoken of, either because it stood alone, which is scarcely probable, as Bethphage, which lay in the way, had its name from the abundance of fig trees in its neighbourhood; or as one more branchy and verdant than the rest, and which therefore gave greater promise of fruit; and was on that account the better emblem of the Jewish nation, to whose rejection the miracle had a direct reference. *But he found nothing thereon but leaves only.* St. Mark adds, "for the time of figs was not yet;" that is, the time of gathering them had not arrived, and therefore the absence of figs arose from nothing but the barrenness of the tree. This is the plain sense of ου γαρ ην καιρος συκων, as appears from Matt. xxi, 34, ο καιρος των καρπων, "and when *the time of the fruit* drew near." So unnecessarily have commentators often puzzled themselves and their readers about a plain matter.

In causing this fig tree to wither away, our Lord invaded no private property, as it stood by the *wayside*, and belonged to no one; and besides, being hopelessly barren, it had no value. See note on Mark xi, 13.

Verse 20. *And when the disciples saw it, &c.*—St. Matthew does not mark the order of time, but merely relates the fact: from St. Mark we learn that it was on the next morning, in coming to Jerusalem on the same road, that the disciples noticed that the fig tree was wholly withered. At this they "marvelled," and Christ designed that it should arrest their attention. It was not an act of passionate disappointment in him to curse the fig tree because he found no fruit thereon, as infidels have profanely asserted, which is refuted by his whole character, on which a calm dignity was constantly impressed; he knew that there was no fruit on it, and he might have gone to other trees, where his wants might have been supplied; but he intended to teach his disciples an awful lesson by an emblem which not only pointed out the doom of a degenerate nation, of whose hypocritical and delusive pretensions the barren fig tree was a sign, but also that of hypocrites and apostates from his religion; for to this event St. Jude appears strikingly to allude when he marks the character and fate of such persons, as "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

Verse 21. *If ye have faith, and doubt not, &c.*—The lesson just mentioned Christ leaves the disciples to infer; but he teaches them, from the sudden withering of the fig tree at his word, the efficiency of faith. The addition, "and doubt not," μη διακριθητε, is added, not in the sense of *discriminate*, but as equivalent to διςαζω; and thus to believe and doubt not, signifies the highest degree of faith in God. In all such cases of working miracles through faith, a special revelation or impression as to the will of God is, however, supposed; for the confidence of man has no warrant beyond God's promise. The sense is well expressed by Mr. Baxter, "Nothing shall be too hard which God hath promised, and ye by faith and prayer are fit to receive." Hence the apostles wrought their miracles in the most solemn manner, as men in immediate communication with God and acting under intimations from him; and to show that this power was not one so

ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.

23 ¶ [i] And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; [k] for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said,

[i] Mark xi, 27; Luke xx, 1.

[k] Matt. xiv, 5.

residing in them as to be wielded at pleasure, our Lords adds, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive;" which, however, supposes, that we ask, as St. John says, "according to the will of God;" which applies to the receiving of the power to work miracles, as well as more generally to blessings, ordinarily and more specially promised not only to the apostles, but to all believers in all future ages. For this encouragement to believing prayer is not, like the working of miracles, to be confined to the apostles, but is a general promise. Whatever is asked in faith, agreeably to the will of God, and which we are authorized to make the subject of our supplications, as being contained in his covenant promises, shall be given, though apparently impossible to attain, and though really so, independent of the immediate exertion of the power of God. To remove a mountain, is a proverbial phrase for performing things the most difficult or impossible. Hence the Jews say of an acute doctor, one who is able to solve the most intricate questions, "He is a rooter up of mountains."

Verse 23. *The chief priests and elders of the people.*—These were the members of the great council, or sanhedrim, and they came to him in their official capacity; for it belonged to them to inquire into the pretensions of all who assumed the office of prophet, and to punish any whom they might determine had taken that character falsely. Hence in a rabbinical tract entitled "Sanhedrim," it is said, "A tribe, a false prophet, or a high priest, is only amenable to the council of seventy-one judges." These members of the council, therefore, demanded his *authority* for making a public entry into Jerusalem, for casting out the traders from their accustomed place of permitted traffic, and for teaching in the temple; so that, should he allege the authority of God, and explicitly profess the prophetic office, they might immediately call him before the council, and sit in judgment upon his claims. They probably also chose to seek a confession from his own mouth that he was a prophet, and to take advantage of any thing on which they might found a charge of blasphemy, rather than apprehend him without some new charge which the popular excitement in his favour might, as they supposed, render somewhat dangerous. Our Lord baffles this plot with the highest wisdom, because his "hour was not yet come," and he had yet to deliver many weighty discourses, and for the public benefit to bear a severer testimony against the hypocrisy and wickedness of this cunning and corrupt race of men.

Verse 25. *The baptism of John, &c.*—That is, the ministry of John, of which baptism upon repentance, and faith in the immediate advent of Messiah, was so prominent a part; which ministry John fulfilled under the profession of Divine authority. The way in which our Lord put the case was, as though he said, "You affect to determine who are true and who are false prophets. Now John professed to be a prophet: was his authority *from heaven, or of men?* was he a real or only a pretended messenger from God?" The dilemma into which they were thrown is confessed among themselves, and was no doubt revealed to the evangelist, who records their "reasoning among themselves," by inspiration, as they were not likely to make it publicly known; unless, indeed, we may suppose some one of the council, more favourable to the claims of Christ, as Nicodemus, might report it. They said, "If we shall say, From Heaven," that is, from God, because used in that sense by the Jews, as sometimes by us, "He will say, Why did ye not then believe him," and become his disciples, instead of slighting and persecuting him? "But if we shall say, Of men," a merely human and self-instituted ministry, "*we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet;*" which, indeed, was so strong a persuasion among them, that they considered the defeat of Herod's army, in his war with Aretas, king of Arabia, to be a signal judgment of God upon him on account of the murder of the Baptist. Between a decision which would have condemned themselves, and one which would have exasperated the people, and lessened

We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 ¶ But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For [1] John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed

[1] St. Matthew, chap. iii, 1.

their credit with them, they were held so firmly, that their only way of escape was to confess their ignorance of the matter; which only brought them into a difficulty more seriously fatal to their pretensions, because it was a confession that they were unable to judge between true and false prophets, Divine and self-constituted messengers, the power of which they arrogated to the sanhedrim. Hence, when they replied, *We cannot tell*, our Lord rejoins, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things;* that is, "Since you have confessed your inability to discriminate the marks of a true and false prophet in the case of John, it follows that you are unfit to decide every similar case; and I refuse to put myself upon your judgment."

Verse 28. *A certain man had two sons, &c.*—This parable was designed to reprove the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, for professsing to pay a ready obedience to the commands of God, and yet rejecting the ministry of John. Although they declined to say whether John's ministry was from God or not, our Lord determines the case, and charges them with a sinful opposition to his authorized mission.

Verse 29. *I will not, but afterward he repented, &c.*—These represented, according to our Lord's own explanation, verse 32, "the publicans and the harlots," that is, notorious sinners, who had openly and rebelliously contemned the Divine authority; but afterward believed John's doctrine, listened to his warnings, and turned with a penitent mind to God; to which class of persons it would appear that considerable numbers were recovered by John's ministry.

Verse 30. *I go, sir, and went not.*—Εγω κυριε, the ellipsis being supplied by απερχομαι. This prompt but hypocritical assent, followed by disobedience, represented the criminal dissimulation of the Pharisees, who, pretending to pay the most perfect regard to every injunction of God, held the publicans and other common sinners in the utmost contempt, and yet neither received the testimony of John at first, nor, even after they had seen the mighty effects produced in the reformation of the greatest sinners, *afterward repented*, and acknowledged his mission.

Verse 31. *They say unto him, The first.*—In this kind of interlocutory argument he to whom the question was proposed was bound to answer, although he might see that his reply would only give occasion to his antagonist to turn the conclusion against himself. The debate was in public; and silence on the part of the Pharisees, who had introduced it, would have been a confession that they were refuted: they were impelled, therefore, to make answer to our Lord's questions, although at every step his remarks pressed with heavier weight upon them.

The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.—The τελωναι, and the πορναι, stand for openly careless, or immoral persons in general; and as these were most powerfully and speedily brought to repentance by John, so our Lord declares that the same effect would follow under his dispensation of religion: they would enter *the kingdom of God* before the self-righteous and deluded formalists.

Verse 32. *In the way of righteousness.*—Enjoining it even to severity, and strictly practising it himself; and ye who make great professions of sanctity, and self-denial, and respect to them, wherever found, did not receive him as a prophet. This is the point of the reproof: they boasted of strict righteousness, conformity to all the institutions of God; and in this way John came to them, this was the character of his ministry, which they, however, proudly spurned, and thereby declared their hypocrisy.

Some apply this parable of the two sons to the Gentiles and Jews; the former of whom, though for ages openly disobedient to the commands of God, to the law written upon their hearts, or handed down by tradition, promptly embraced the Gospel; while the Jews, who, at least ever since the return from the captivity, had paid all outward respect to the worship and revelations of God, yet wholly rejected the Gospel, which stood upon the same kind of evidence as their law and prophets. Still this application is only inferential and secondary; for our Lord himself explains the parable of the two classes of men among the Jews who are

him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, [m] which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, [n] This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, [o] Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is

[m] Isaiah v, 1; Jeremiah ii, 21; Mark xii, 1; Luke xx, 9.

[n] Matt. xxvi, 3; John xi, 53.—[o] Psalm cxviii, 22; Acts iv, 11.

mentioned. It, however, frequently happens, in Christian communities, that they who are the most complaisant as to truth, are the farthest from the kingdom of God; and that the openly rebellious wills of the wicked are suddenly and effectually turned to God by the power of his grace, and that they deal more honestly with their spiritual dangers, and accept with greater readiness the free salvation of Christ.

Verse 33. *A vineyard.*—The Jewish Church.

A wine press.—Or wine vat, into which the grapes were cast, and then trodden by men. It was often hewed out of a rock, and had a grated opening near the bottom to convey the expressed juice into a lower vat.

And built a tower.—The towers in vineyards were principally watch houses, where servants were placed to observe the approach of robbers.

To husbandmen.—Γεωργοις, to those who cultivate the ground by their own labour, as distinguished from the οικοδεσποτης, or proprietor.

Verse 34. *When the time of the fruit.*—The season for gathering the fruits; so that it appears that the rent of the vineyard was paid in produce, which was an ancient custom.

Verse 37. *They will reverence my son.*—This is another proof that the minor circumstances of parables are not to be interpreted strictly. God foreknew that the Jews would reject the Son, which is made the subject of prophecy; but it was their duty to receive him with *reverence*, and so the words are used to express what it was fitting and reasonable to expect.

Verse 41. *He will miserably destroy those wicked men.*—Thus were the scribes and Pharisees made to pass sentence upon themselves. They were the descendants of a race who had persecuted God's *servants*, the prophets, beating one, and stoning another; and now they themselves were conspiring against the life of the *son*, the *heir* of the vineyard. Their Church privileges were therefore to be abolished, their nation destroyed, and the vineyard let out to others, who should render the fruits in their seasons. This was a plain allusion to the calling of the Gentiles.

Verse 42. *Did ye never read in the Scriptures? &c.*—The passage quoted by our Lord is from Psalm cxviii, 22, 23. It was first spoken of David, who, after having been persecuted by Saul, and rejected by the chiefs of Israel, at last triumphed over all his enemies, and raised the state to unexampled prosperity and strength. He might therefore be well compared to a stone rejected by the builders, which had become the head stone of the corner, giving grace and strength to the whole building. Our Lord applies this passage to himself, for to him it ultimately referred; and thus, as he had predicted his own death at the murderous hands of the scribes and Pharisees, he predicts also his future glory, as at once the foundation and the chief corner stone of that vast spiritual temple which God was about to set up in the earth. The princes and chiefs of a people were called פנות, rendered in the Septuagint, γωνιαι, *corner stones:* so, 1 Sam. xiv, 38,

the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And [p] whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

[p] Rom. ix, 33; 1 Peter ii, 7; Isaiah viii, 14.

πασας τας γωνιας του Ισραηλ, "all the chief of Israel." Christ has this eminence, that he is both the foundation stone and the chief stone of the corner. Thus he supports and completes the fabric of his Church, sustains the whole weight, unites the various parts, and crowns the whole with strength and beauty.

Verse 43. *Therefore say I unto you, &c.*—The connection of this verse, which some have thought out of its place, is marked by the words, *δια τουτο*, "*on this account* I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you," &c.; because you builders have rejected the stone chosen of God, elect and precious, his Church shall be built up among another people, even the Gentile nations whom ye despise and hate. One of the Jewish commentators, Jarchi, has a singular note upon the words in Jer. xiii, 17, "My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." "Because of your grandeur, which shall cease; because of the excellency of the kingdom of heaven, which shall be given to the profane."

Verse 44. *And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, &c.*—The allusion here does not appear to be to one method of stoning, which Maimonides says was practised among the Jews, that is, first casting down from a precipice upon the rock below, which, if not fatal, was followed by rolling a large stone down upon the criminal; which is somewhat far-fetched, and indeed was not the common method of inflicting that punishment. It rather arises out of the metaphor of the stone rejected by the builders, whether considered as a foundation or the top stone of the corner. As the one represented our Lord's humiliation and sufferings, the only foundation of saving trust, the other was an emblem of the glory and majesty of his exaltation to the right hand of God. In the former, he was "a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence;" first, to all the Jews who rejected a suffering Messiah, and by consequence, his sacrificial death; and then to all others who equally spurned Christ crucified as the only ground of their hope of salvation. Thus they were *broken*, so wounded as to sustain great injury, yet not but that they might repent and find mercy; for their case is not represented as absolutely fatal, until the stone at the head of the corner should *fall upon them*. This signifies a judicial wielding of Christ's power and supreme authority, against all such as rejected him, though after much long suffering and delay. With respect to the Jews as a nation, this took place after the Gospel, in its perfected form, with all the additional attestations of Christ's resurrection and ascension, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, had been for many years proclaimed among them, and pressed upon their acceptance. But they continued to *fall upon* or stumble at the foundation, and still more grievously to wound and injure themselves; until at last Christ turned against them the weight of his power as the Judge, and utterly destroyed their city and nation. Thus also it shall be with every individual who rejects Christ as a Saviour: he too must meet him in his glory as Judge, and in "the hour of death, and in the day of judgment," shall awfully realize the truth of the words, "On whomsoever this stone shall fall, it will grind him to powder." *Συνθλασθαι*, and *λικμαν*, are of different degrees of force: the former signifies *to bruise*; the latter, *to disperse*, as chaff, from *λικμος*, a winnowing van; and hence is used figuratively for utter destruction, or a dashing in pieces.

Verse 46. *They feared the multitude.*—This shows that not only the people who came up with our Lord from Jericho, but vast numbers who were now collecting from all parts to celebrate the passover at Jerusalem, admitted his claims as a prophet, and would have been excited to tumult by any open attempt to apprehend him. This rendered it necessary for his enemies to proceed with circumspection and subtlety; and therefore St. Luke adds, "They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor."

CHAPTER XXII.

1 The parable of the marriage of the king's son. 9 The vocation of the Gentiles. 12 The punishment of him that wanted the wedding garment. 15 Tribute ought to be paid to Cesar. 23 Christ confuteth the Sadducees for the resurrection: 34 answereth the lawyer, which is the first and great commandment: 41 and poseth the Pharisees about the Messiah.

1 And Jesus answered [a] and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took his servants,

[a] Luke xiv, 16; Rev. xix, 9.

CHAPTER XXII. Verse 1. *And Jesus answered, &c.*—It has been before remarked that this formula does not always signify a reply to what precedes, nor indeed the continuance of the same subject; but sometimes the commencement of a new discourse. Here our Lord addresses the people in the temple, the scribes and Pharisees, who had not only understood, but keenly felt the force of the parables he had just uttered, having, as St. Mark informs us, departed.

Verse 2. *A marriage feast.*—The procedure of God under the Gospel dispensation, and the conduct of men, are compared to that of a sovereign who made a marriage feast, and invited many guests. Γαμος, and γαμοι, are used simply for a *feast*, sometimes for a *marriage feast*, the plural intimating the number of days occupied by the festivity, and which rendered it rather a succession of *feasts*, than one only. Some modern critics, as Michaelis, Rosenmuller, Koinoel, and Schleusner, understand it as a feast of inauguration, in which, according to the eastern mode of speaking, sovereigns were solemnly united to their country as by the conjugal bond. Thus Rosenmuller, *Nam ex moribus orientalium reges die inaugurationis considerantur ut sponsi et mariti, rite et solemniter jungendi civitati et subditis, qui sponsæ et conjugi comparantur.* Whatever the occasion was, the point turns upon its being a great and munificent royal feast, to which all who were invited were bound to come, not only for their own honour and advantage, but in respect of their loyalty, and to show this by acknowledging the Son, for whose dignity, and in recognition of whose right, it was instituted. St. Luke has a similar parable; but it was uttered on another occasion.

Verse 3. *Sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden.*—Servants were on some occasions first sent around to invite the guests; these were called *vocatures* by the Romans, and κλητορες by the Greeks; and thus notice was given of the time of the entertainment. But, on the evening of the day appointed, messengers were sent *to call or summon them that were bidden*; that is, those who were previously invited. Hence St. Luke says, "And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready."

Verse 4. *He sent forth other servants, &c.*—Thus he urged even those to come who had insolently and disloyally refused his servants, setting forth the abundance and sumptuousness of the banquet, in order to give effect to their invitation: *My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come to the feast.* The dinner, το αριστον, was the early meal of the day; and what we call such, as being the principal meal, was deferred till the business and heat of the day was over, that is, till the evening, and was called το δειπνον, which we render supper. Both terms are, however, often used generally for a *feast*.

Verses 5, 6. *But they made light of it, &c.*—Two classes are here particularly marked: 1. The CARELESS, who neglected the invitation, and went to their occupations. 2. The PERSECUTING, the remnant, οι λοιποι; all who were not simply careless, who resisted the servants, treated them ignominiously, and put them to death.

So far the parable applies to the Jews exclusively. Under the figure of a royal feast is doubtless represented that fulness of spiritual blessings to which they were invited by the first preachers of the Gospel immediately upon our Lord's exaltation. But whether this feast is to be considered as a *marriage feast*, is doubtful; and the mystical expositions which rest upon this supposition are

and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as

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therefore without sufficient basis. It is at least equally probable that the allusion is to the inauguration of the son of a king, into a joint government with his royal father; but this also is not sufficiently clear to warrant any inference being drawn from it. It is safer therefore to consider it simply as a feast given by a king in honour of his son, whatever might be the occasion. The Syriac version renders γαμους simply *a feast*. The Jews are said to be twice invited; first, *bidden*, and then summoned when the feast was ready. The servants, the κλητορες, who performed this service, were the prophets down to John the Baptist; all of whom in succession announced this royal feast, or the blessings to be bestowed in the age of Messiah, and held them out to the hope of Israel. Thus the Jews were already the invited, or those *bidden*. The servants who were repeatedly sent after *all things were ready* cannot, as Whitby thinks, represent the seventy disciples sent forth by our Lord; for *all things* were not then *ready*; the feast was not fully prepared until after the sacrifice and exaltation of our Lord. We are, therefore, to understand by these servants the apostles, and other disciples in succession, who, after the day of pentecost, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, repeatedly urged upon their countrymen the acceptance of those gracious offers of pardon and reconciliation which they had been authorized to make; but who were treated either with careless neglect, or with contumely, persecution, or martyrdom. Then followed the destruction and burning of their city by the Romans; a standing monument to the world, in all future ages, of the aggravated offence of slighting the overtures of mercy, and of despising the Gospel. This calamity is, however, spoken of by anticipation, as Gentiles were invited long before the Jews were finally rejected; but it is introduced to complete that branch of the parable which relates to the Jews as a people. What follows has respect both to Jews and Gentiles; to all, in fact, who, to the end of time, may profess to embrace the great evangelical invitation, and come into the Church under profession of a desire to partake of the blessings promised to her true members, both in this and a future life.

Verse 8. *The wedding is ready, &c.*—Γαμος ετοιμος εστιν, the feast is prepared, *but they which were bidden were not worthy*. Here αξιος is not to be understood in the sense of meritoriousness, but WELL DISPOSED; as in chap. x, 11, where the apostles when sent forth are directed to inquire, when they entered a city, who in it was "worthy," disposed to entertain such messengers, and receive religious instruction; or it may be taken in the sense of *fitness*, or *congruity*, as Christ declares that the man who will not take up his cross and follow him cannot be "worthy of him;" that is, there was no congruity between such a disciple and his master, no correspondence of the one to the other. So here there was no correspondence between the dispositions and tastes of the persons invited to the feast, and the honours and blessings prepared for their acceptance.

Verse 9. *Into the highways, &c.*—The διεξοδοι were the ways leading out of a city, converged into one great road, and where, on that account, a number of travellers would be met with. Extracts have been brought from the rabbinical writings to show that it was customary with the rich to invite poor travellers to their feasts, in order to illustrate this part of the parable; but that this was not common, at least in our Lord's day, appears from one of his parables, where he reproves the wealthy Jews for inviting the rich only to their tables. The persons here invited by the king were evidently those who are ordinarily overlooked and despised, and so their invitation represented the universal call of the Gospel to men of all classes and nations, poor as well as rich, publicans, sinners, strangers, and Gentiles; a striking emblem of which was the indiscriminate and promiscuous crowds of people, from every part, who would always be hastening to some populous trading city of Palestine, where might be found not only Jews from distant nations, but Gentiles also, Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Chaldeans, Edomites, and many others. Yet all were bidden to the feast.

Verse 10. *Both bad and good.*—The doors of Christ's Church are to be thrown open to all who profess to accept the invitation; but it follows not from this that no discipline is to be exercised in it before "the king comes in to see the guests." But it was not the design of the parable to illustrate this subject; and it is therefore passed over, that deficiency being abundantly supplied by other parts of the New Testament. It is, however, intimated, as in some other parables,

many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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that the Church would, after all, remain in a mixed state, and not be thoroughly purged of formalists and pretenders till the day of judgment. Then indeed "the king will come in to see the guests;" every one of whom must pass the scrutiny of an omniscient eye, from which none can escape in the crowd. That piercing glance which "tries the reins and the heart" will search the whole as though they were but one individual, and each individual of the vast assemblage as though he were alone.

And the wedding was furnished with guests.—Here γαμος is used metonymically for the place where the guests were assembled. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it "the house of the feast."

Verse 11. *A man which had not on a wedding garment.*—As there is nothing in the parable to oblige us to consider this feast as a wedding entertainment, so ενδυμα γαμου may be taken to signify generally a *banqueting robe;* for a certain style of dress, as far as respected the outer garment, was required at all feasts, and, in some cases, it was a mark of the magnificence of the entertainer to furnish his guests with them; to refuse which was, of course, a high indignity.—Whether we understand by it such robes as were worn at nuptial or other feasts, is, however, a matter of indifference. Changes of raiment furnished to the guests are mentioned in Homer, and the relics of the custom still remain in the east. The Romans wore a white robe at some of their public feasts; and the etiquette of a particular robe for certain occasions was much insisted upon. Thus Spartianus, in his Life of Severus, relates that this emperor had an omen of his future greatness in this circumstance, that, being invited to sup with the emperor, he went in his short cloak, *pallium*, instead of his gown, *toga*, when he was immediately furnished with a gown worn by the emperor himself. A similar occurrence is related of Maximinus, who, when a youth, being invited with his father to sup with the Emperor Alexander Severus, not having a supper gown, *vestis cænatoria*, he was supplied with one which belonged to the emperor. In the scene to which the parable conducts us, as the guests were collected out of the highways, and consisted of travellers and strangers, and it was required of each to sit down in a particular robe, this part of their dress must have been prepared for them in the king's public wardrobe, which was no doubt duly pointed out by the servants who brought them in, and knew the rules of the festivity. It is equally clear that not having on the robe which the established etiquette required was entirely the fault of the guest singled out and challenged by the Lord of the feast; because he had no defence to offer,—*and he was speechless*, εφιμωθη, *was silenced, struck dumb;* and, farther, that a great offence had been committed by him, because of his expulsion from the company and the punishment inflicted upon him: *Bind him hand and foot*, arrest him as a prisoner of state, one who has slighted the favours and mocked the majesty of his sovereign; *and take him away*, separate him from a company into which he ought never to have intruded, exclude him from the joys of the festivity; *and cast him into outer* or the external *darkness: there shall be weeping*, &c. See note on chap. viii, 12.

It would be wearisome to enumerate all the notions which have been entertained of the mystical signification of this wedding or festal garment. One contends for imputed righteousness, another for implanted, a third for both. Some have argued for baptism, others for faith, others for charity and good works. Nothing, however, can be more clear than that as this garment would have constituted the MEETNESS of a man to be received as a guest at the feast, so it must represent all those qualities COLLECTIVELY which constitute our meetness for heaven.—And as we are so expressly informed that "without holiness no man can see the Lord;" and as habits of dress are constantly used figuratively to express moral habits of the mind and life, the virtues wrought in man by God's Spirit, and exhibited in a course of external obedience to his will; that one word HOLINESS, implying, as it does in the Christian sense, both the regeneration of those who have penitently received Christ as the propitiation for sin, and the maturing of all the graces of their new nature by the same influence of the Holy Ghost, will fully express all that is comprehended by having the wedding or festal robe. If we are thus "found of him without spot and blameless," we shall be welcomed "into the joy of our Lord;" but if not, as we cannot escape detection, when the king comes in to see the guests, so are we in the parable most forcibly premonished of our doom, and of that

14 [b] For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

15 ¶ [c] Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man:* for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cesar, or not?

[b] Matt. xx, 16.

[c] Mark xii, 13; Luke xx, 20.

consciousness of guilt which shall leave us without excuse. Εταιρε, *friend*, is not a word of recognition or affection, but one used to a stranger; and πως εισηλθες ωδε, *How camest thou in hither?* is a strong reproof: *by what right?* under what presumption?

Verse 14. *For many are called, &c.*—Many are summoned or INVITED, few chosen or APPROVED; for such is the meaning of the word, which is not to be taken in the sense of arbitrary selection, but as expressing an act of choice founded upon sufficient reasons. See note on chap. xx, 16, &c.—This moral is subjoined to the whole parable, and relates therefore both to the Jews and Gentiles, and is to all awfully admonitory.

Verse 15. *Then went the Pharisees, &c.*—As they feared the people too much to apprehend Christ at once, though greatly enraged at the former parables he had spoken with direct reference to them, they determined to proceed by stratagem, *and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk*, παγιδευσωσιν, how they might *ensnare* him, a term taken from ensnaring or entrapping birds, in his conversation. This they attempted to do by endeavouring artfully to extract an opinion from him on the *lawfulness* of paying tribute to the Romans, on which some of them affected great tenderness of conscience. Thus they came to him under pretence of making a *religious* inquiry, hoping that his answer might enable them to charge him before the Roman governor as the seditious leader of a multitude collected to subvert the existing government. The persons sent were disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians. As to the latter, great diversity of opinion exists among critics, some considering them as a political sect attached to the Herodian family from the time of Herod the Great, who was always highly unpopular with the Jews in general; others as a religious sect, and the same as the Sadducees, from whom, however, they are distinguished, verse 23. There are several other opinions; but the probability is, that this was both a political and a religious distinction; political, as being confined to the party of Herod; and religious, as this party was composed of Sadducees, whose opinions Herod adopted, and who like him had little scruple in conforming, in compliment to the Romans, to many pagan customs, which the Jews held in abhorrence. Herod Antipas was at this time at Jerusalem, which was the time of the passover; and the Herodians here mentioned were probably in attendance upon him. The union of these with the disciples of the Pharisees was artfully adapted to the designed plot laid to entrap our Lord. The Pharisees were averse, on religious grounds, to pay tribute to the Romans, that is, to submit to their government; and the feeling of the body of the people was with them.—Herod and his party leaned chiefly upon the Roman power, and therefore supported their claims, though more out of fear than affection. The question, therefore, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar or not?* might seem naturally to have arisen between the parties in an accidental collision, and they come to Christ with abundance of complimentary expressions, and affect to appeal to his superior wisdom to decide it.

Verse 17. *Is it lawful to pay tribute? &c.*—The word κηνσος is the Latin *census*, in Greek letters, and is used both for an enumeration of the people, and, as here, also for the capitation tax levied upon them in those Roman provinces which did not, as Italy, enjoy the privilege of exemption.—This was entirely different from the temple tribute before mentioned, which was a *didrachm* or half shekel from every Jew throughout the world. The question being, whether it was *lawful* to pay the poll tax to Cesar, which was a mark of the subjection of Judea, as a province, to the Roman power, necessarily implied whether it was not a religious duty to unite and throw off this subjection by violence. If, therefore, our Lord had determined that it was not lawful to pay the tribute, he would have been charged with sanctioning rebellion; but if he had declared the contrary, this might have been employed to lessen his present influence with the multitude, by representing him as an abettor of the Roman tyranny, and as having uttered a decision utterly incompatible with his own pretensions. "For how," they might have said to the multitudes that followed him, "can he be the Messiah, as you believe, who, instead of delivering you from a foreign yoke, enjoins

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a [d] penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and [e] superscription?

21 They say unto him, Cesar's. Then saith he unto them, [f] Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's;

[d] In value sevenpence halfpenny, Matt. xx, 2.

[e] Or, *inscription*.—[f] Rom. xiii, 7.

even the *lawfulness*, and not merely the *expediency*, for a time, of submitting to this exercise of a foreign and idolatrous domination?" But how soon were "the wise taken in their own craftiness!" *Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?* St. Luke says, "perceiving their craftiness."

Verse 19. *Show me the tribute money.*—The coin in which the tax was paid; for the Romans required the payment in Roman money.

And they brought unto him a penny.—That is, *a denarius*, value about 7½d. "The denarius," says Adolphus Occo, "paid by the Jews as tribute money, had around the head of Cesar this inscription, Καισαρ Αυγουστ. Ιουδαιας εαλωκιας. Cesar Augustus; Judea being subdued." "But it might," says Hammond, "have been a denarius of Tiberius." Whatever it was, it had both a head of Cesar, called his *image*, and an *epigraph* or *superscription*, which was the name of the emperor.

Verse 21. *Render therefore unto Cesar, &c.*—Those who think that our Lord in reality determined the artful question which was put to him on the side of the *lawfulness* of paying tribute to Cesar, do not disentangle him from the dilemma which was prepared for him; and hence we see in commentators many just things said of the consummate wisdom of this answer without any clear indication of that in which its wisdom consists. Thus the generality of interpreters have more ably exhibited the snare laid for Christ by the question proposed, than made it manifest how his reply evaded it. But that our Lord did not determine the question either way, is plain from the effect produced upon the inquirers. St. Matthew says, "They marvelled and left him;" St. Luke, "They could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." Now certainly, if he had decided that it was lawful to pay tribute to the Romans in the sense in which its lawfulness was understood in the question, this was one of the decisions they wished to obtain from him; and being in favour of the unpopular Roman power, they might have "taken hold of his words before the people." But the question, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cesar, or not?" was equivalent to, "Is this submission to a foreign and idolatrous power forbidden by the law of God, or is it not?" And it was put with manifest reference to the duty of insurrection, or an attempt to throw off that yoke which the opinion of its being unlawful for the people of God, as they still thought themselves, in several instances led to, and which all were constantly meditating, the Herodians not excepted, whose support of the Roman claims was the result of an unwilling and constrained policy, only they wished the supreme power to be lodged in the family of Herod, to whom the Jews generally were averse. The point therefore they wished to be solved was, whether they were bound, in conscience, by the law of God, to acknowledge a foreign yoke as of Divine appointment, by paying tribute, or to throw it off, not by the refusal of individuals to pay tribute, (for that they did and were compelled to do,) but by the joint effort of the nation, as incompatible with their relation to God as his peculiar people. This was the case which our Lord did not determine; the case of right and wrong, as it lay between the Romans and the Jewish nation, which would have brought in endless questions as to the origin of the Roman power, the manner in which it had been used, the degree of injustice which must be sustained before a nation can legally throw off an allegiance to which it has submitted, and a definition of the theocracy in the modified form in which it then existed, and which was so soon to expire; with many other considerations of a political and minute kind which Christianity does not interfere with, contenting itself with declaring that government is of God, and prescribing the general duties of rulers and subjects, without determining modes of civil polity, or settling points which the nature of mutual compacts and the known principles of justice are sufficient of themselves to determine without a revelation. He leaves the whole question of the RIGHT or *lawfulness* of sovereignty between the Jews and the Romans untouched; but he lays it down that a settled government, *de facto*, whatever may be the ground on which its claims rest, whether clear or questionable, is entitled to receive tribute, as affording protection and fulfilling the general purposes of government for the public welfare, by the application of the talents and time of its officers and the expense of various agencies. He neither says how much tribute, nor how little; whether the sovereignty under which the tribute was exacted was legitimate or usurped;

and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

23 ¶ [g] The same day came to him the Sadducees, [h] which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, [i] Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother.

[g] Mark xii, 18; Luke xx, 27.

[h] Acts xxiii, 8.—[i] Deut. xxv, 5.

whether it might or might not be modified; or in some circumstances changed by public resistance; but simply, that a government, in the regular exercise of an acknowledged dominion, should be maintained by the tribute of the people. Now the exhibition of the Roman money, in which the tribute was paid, proved the fact of the Roman dominion; its circulation as a part of the current coin of Judea proved that the Roman government was in the regular exercise of its authority, defending property and life; therefore that it had its claims, and something belonged to Cesar, as of right, considered as their supreme governor, maintaining a magistracy under him for the public welfare, quite independent of the original title, or the question of the present legitimacy of the sovereignty itself; and in this our Lord agreed with their own writers, who say, "Whenever the money of any king is current, the inhabitants acknowledge that king for their lord." In this, then, lay the WISDOM of our Lord's reply, which furnished his followers, in future times, with a most important principle to guide them in their civil conduct. He leaves the particular questions of government to be regulated by human prudence, on the same principle that he refused to be the arbitrator in a question respecting an inheritance; but enjoins that wherever a regular government exists, it shall receive tribute, and that none are to take its *benefits* without giving back its *dues*. And the PRUDENCE was as conspicuous as the wisdom; for, as he left the question of the lawfulness of their subjection as a nation to the Romans undecided, and grounded his exhortation to pay tribute to Cesar, not upon that, but upon their own principle, that "wherever the money of a king is current, the inhabitants acknowledge him for their lord;" as, in other words, they perceived that he placed the obligation of paying tribute upon that ordinary state of things in which a sovereign power bestows the benefits of civil government, and a people accepts them, "they marvelled and held their peace;" the answer had taken an unexpected turn, and "they could not take hold of his words before the people." This obligation to pay tribute is, however, put by our Lord under two restrictions: Cesar is to claim nothing but what "is Cesar's," that only which of right belongs to him; and he is neither to claim, nor are we to render, what is "God's," what of right belongs to him, as declared in his own word. This latter is a grand principle engrafted on the former, and had, no doubt, as well as the other, a prospective reference. "Cesar," as Le Clerc well expresses it, "is your prince, and may demand his tribute; your religion properly and solely belongs to God." Here the civil ruler has no right to command, you have no power to submit.—Whatever God claims you must render; and if Cesar intrude here, you must suffer rather than sin. At all hazards, we are to "render unto God the things which are God's,"—love, worship, obedience, according to an honest interpretation of his will as contained in the Scriptures inspired by him, which interpretation is a matter of pure conscience between us and God alone.

Verse 23. *The Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection.*—The object of the Pharisees and Herodians was to entangle him in a political difficulty; that of the Sadducees, in a theological one, and by putting an objection to the doctrine of a resurrection, which they thought he could not answer, to lower his reputation for wisdom before the multitude. To deny the resurrection of the body was but one of the tenets of the Sadducees: they denied the existence of "angels and spirits," holding, says Josephus, that the soul, *συναφανιζει*, vanishes with the body, and confining all rewards and punishments to the present life. It followed, therefore, from their denial of the immortality of the soul and its existence after death, that they should deny the resurrection of the body. To this doctrine they added philosophical objections, and persuaded themselves that it was impossible. Hence the appeal of St. Paul, Acts xxvi, 8, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Here, however, they bring not a philosophic, but a popular objection.

Verse 24. *Moses said, If a man die, &c.*—By an ancient custom of the Hebrews, which was afterward sanctioned by the Mosaic law, if a man died childless, leaving a widow, the brother of the deceased, or the nearest male relation, was bound to marry the widow; to give to the first-born son th-

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 [k] I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

[k] Exodus, chap. iii, 6.

name of the deceased; to insert his name in the genealogical register; and to deliver the estate of the deceased into his possession.

His brother shall marry his wife.—Επιγαμβρευω signifies to marry a wife by the law of affinity. See Gen. xxxviii, 8, and Deut. xxv, 5.

Verse 28. *Whose wife shall she be? &c.*—It appears, that though the Pharisees held the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, their gross corruption of all spiritual things, which so influenced their interpretation of the prophecies respecting the Messiah, and converted "the kingdom of heaven" into a worldly monarchy, had produced a like darkening effect upon their conceptions of a future state. They allowed of marriage in heaven; and, generally, Josephus compares their ideas of a future life to those of the Greek poets; and if Maimonides and other subsequent rabbins speak in more spiritual terms, and with more worthy conceptions of the world to come, this is another instance in which they derived superior knowledge from the Gospel without acknowledging it. Still this was a subject debated among the modern rabbins, some of them still clinging to the gross opinions of the Pharisees of our Lord's day. In disputing with the Pharisees, the Sadducees had probably started this and similar difficulties as to the resurrection, with some success; and this rendered them the more confident.

Verse 29. *Not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*—They knew not the true doctrine of the inspired writings on this subject, which was not to be confounded with the gross and erring conceptions of men. If infidels and semi-infidels would fairly inquire into the true sense of Scripture, and not fix upon the weak opinions which many have corruptly or hastily deduced from it, they would be deprived of half their arguments. As they were ignorant of the Scriptures, so also of the *power of God*, taking limited and partial views of that infinite attribute; otherwise they would have seen that He who gives life must have power to restore life; that He who built the body of man out of the dust of the earth can rebuild it after it has crumbled into dust again; that, in point of fact, God is always changing lifeless inorganic matter into the living bodies of vegetables, animals, and men; and that, as to the difficulties which have in all ages been urged against the resurrection of the same body, from the scattering of its parts, and their supposed conversion into others, it is even manifest to reason that a Being of almighty power is able to prevent every combination and change in the world of matter which could frustrate his design, and involve a contradiction to it, and that this supposes only the same constant, though wonderful superintendence and government which the maintenance of the regular order of all things daily, and indeed every moment, demands, and which, we are sure, from the effect, is always exerted.

Verse 30. *In the resurrection they neither marry, &c.*—The resurrection from the dead is expressed by *αναστασις*, a figurative term, which signifies *a rising up*, and is opposed to *πτωσις, a falling down. In the resurrection* here means, in the state to which men are introduced by the resurrection. As our Lord here so formally lays down the doctrine that there is no marriage in heaven, it is plain that the opposite opinion had been generally entertained by the advocates of the resurrection; and, indeed, if not, it would have been a mere impertinence for the Sadducees to have urged an objection which clearly had no relation to the doctrine as held by their opponents. Our Lord, therefore, not merely to silence them, but to instruct his followers, draws the veil more fully from before that new and eternal state of being which shall succeed the general resurrection, discloses its exclusive SPIRITUAL character, and shuts out for ever those gross conceptions with which imagination has clothed its pagan, Pharisaic, and Mohammedan paradises. It does not, however, follow from this exalted view of a future life, that we shall not recognize each other; nor that those tender intellectual affections which bind pious friends and relations to each other on earth, shall not there exist. The contrary is indicated in many passages; only we are to recollect that every affection will be purged, not only from sin, but from infirmity.

As the angels of God.—That is, not only

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

34 ¶ [1] But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Saddu-

[1] St. Mark, chap. xii, 28.

in immortality and purity, but in freedom from all bodily appetites.

Verse 32. *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*—As the Sadducees received no other of the sacred books than those of the Pentateuch, our Lord draws his proof from one of them. The words quoted were spoken to Moses, Exod. iii, 6, consequently long after the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and the stress of the argument lies in this, that Jehovah, who had been the God of these patriarchs during life, after their death still calls himself their God: "I AM the God of Abraham," &c. Now to be "their God," expressed a COVENANT relation. He was not only the chosen object of their worship and trust, but stood engaged by his covenant with them to be their patron, protector, and the source of all blessings to them in the present and in a future life; for, in dependence upon this covenant, they were content "to dwell in tents" while on earth, because "they looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It followed, therefore, from the obvious truth that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," or that he could stand in no covenant relation to the dead, that these patriarchs were still alive as to their souls; which utterly subverted the material doctrine of the Sadducees, that they perished with the body. But how did it prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the body? From a supposed difficulty in connecting the argument with this doctrine, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Campbell, and others, depart from the plain meaning of the word *resurrection*, and consider our Lord as arguing generally in favour of a future life. But though our Lord's reasoning proves this also, it does it incidentally; his main discourse being on the resurrection of the body, and the passage before us being quoted from the writings of Moses in confirmation of it. The force of the proof lies in this, that to be "their God" expressed the covenant made with these patriarchs; for it was the manner of the Jews to quote rather the heads of a passage in the Old Testament from which they argued, or to sum up its substance in a leading phrase; and this covenant, as the promise made to Abraham shows, comprehended the gift of Canaan to inherit it. But as Canaan was not put into the possession of Abraham and his immediate descendants, it followed either that the promise had failed, or, if not, that it related in its chief and highest sense to the inheritance of heaven, of which Canaan was an instituted type, and that they must be raised again to enjoy it. For if the Sadducees had acknowledged the *immortality of the soul*, and merely denied the *resurrection of the body*, still the *disembodied spirits* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob *solely* were *then* in possession of heavenly felicity: but the covenant was made with their *whole persons* as men, and could only be fulfilled in their *whole persons*. In confirmation of this view of the argument, it may be remarked that St. Paul considers the promise, "I will be their God," as involving the promise of the heavenly inheritance: "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for, *γαρ*, *because* he hath prepared for them a city." This is what showed God to be their God, that he had prepared for them a city, which they could not possess without a resurrection. Farther, that the Jews thought the promise of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was *personal*, appears from those commentators who contend from this promise that these patriarchs must be raised from the dead to enjoy the land of Israel. The argument of our Lord may therefore be thus stated: Since Jehovah became the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and even after their death declared that he continued to stand to them in that relation, they cannot be dead in your sense, that is, hopelessly and finally so. As to their souls, indeed, they are still alive; and with respect to their bodies, as the covenant was made with their entire persons, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as perfect human beings composed of a body and reasonable soul; and whatever was implied in being "their God" related to their whole man; so whatever it promises the whole man must enjoy; and though a temporary death has intervened as to the body, it shall be raised up at the last day, that the covenant of God may stand firm in all its parts, and that he may be "their God" for ever. The additional clause which St. Luke introduces into this discourse shows that our Lord considered the patriarchs as dead only in a mitigated sense, such as was expressed, indeed, by believers in a resurrection, and especially under the Gospel, by the term sleep; "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for, or *because γαρ*, all," not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all THE DEAD, "live unto him;" they live in his purpose and covenant, and are considered as alive by Him that calleth "things that are not as though they were." It affords another proof that the learned Jews have not scrupled to avail themselves occasionally of the wisdom of Christ, that Manasseh Ben Israel, a rabbi of the eighteenth century, borrows this argument of our Lord to prove the immortality of

ces to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, [m] Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second *is* like unto it,

[m] Deut. vi, 5; Luke x, 27.

the soul, and nearly in his own words a little paraphrased. Producing the same passage from Exodus, he adds, "For God is not the God of the dead, for the dead are not; but of the living, for the living exist; therefore also the patriarchs, in respect of the soul, may rightly be inferred from hence to live."

Verse 33. *They were astonished at his doctrine.*—Accustomed as they were to hear the Pharisees' discourses on the importance of empty ceremonies, and trifling and perplexing traditions, affording no conviction to the understanding, or food to the soul, they were astonished at the clear and satisfactory manner in which the Teacher sent from God placed the greatest and most important subjects before them; the assured manner in which he spoke of eternal and invisible realities, as one possessing the most intimate knowledge of them; and the ease with which he detected the sophistry, and silenced the cavils, of their most noted doctors and disputants.

Verse 35. *A lawyer asked him a question, tempting him.*—A lawyer, *νομικος*, one skilled in the interpretation of the law; the same as a scribe, which is the title given to him by St. Mark. *Tempting* him, that is, *trying* his skill; but whether with a bad or an innocent design does not appear. St. Mark, who relates the story more at large, mentions the commendation bestowed upon him by our Lord, which seems to exonerate him from the charge of captiousness. But he might be put forward by the rest, for the purpose of endeavouring to draw from our Lord some decision on the question, of which they might make a bad use.

Verse 36. *Which is the great commandment in the law?*—The positive is here used emphatically, and has therefore the force of the superlative. "Which is the greatest commandment in the law;" not the law of the two tables, but the whole law, comprehending all the precepts of Moses? On this subject the Jews differed, and warmly disputed, and continued to do so for a long time afterward, as appears from their writings. As they called some commands "light," and others "weighty," some "great," others "little," it followed that some ONE must be the greatest and weightiest of them all; but on this they were not agreed. Some contended for the law of the Sabbath, some for sacrifices, some for circumcision, some for the wearing of phylacteries, giving their reasons for each.

Verse 37. *Jesus saith, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.*—Our Lord answers thus explicitly, not out of respect to the Pharisees, but in order to avail himself of the attention excited by the question, to teach the most important truths of religion to the people. The terms *heart*, *soul*, *mind*, to which St. Luke adds *strength*, are not intended so much to convey distinct ideas, as to give force to the precept by the accumulation of words of nearly the same import. All interpretations, therefore, built upon the supposed variety of meanings which these terms are held to convey, are too refined. The words evidently mean that God is to be loved with the entire affection of the soul, maintained in its most vigorous exercise, so that all its faculties and powers shall be consecrated wholly to his service. This vigorous and entire application of the soul to an object is expressed in like forcible and reiterated terms in 2 Kings xxiii, 25: "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses." And how forcibly is this grand precept commended to our reason as *the first and great commandment*, summing up in itself all the precepts of the first table, as they relate to God! It is first, in respect of its object; love being directed to the greatest and best Being, our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer;—first, in the absolute character of its obligation; being bound upon us by the supreme and infinite excellence of God, and by the innumerable benefits which we have received, and shall be for ever receiving at his hands;—first, in its sanctifying influence upon the heart; for as it is the intense love of a holy Being, it necessarily implies the intense love of holiness, and is indeed the vital purifying flame of holiness itself;—first, because it compels us by a sweet constraint to obedience to every other command; and so "love is the fulfilling of the law;" while the freedom of this obedience, as being that of entire choice and supreme delight, gives the noblest character to submission;—first, as it impels to the most arduous duties, and makes us willing to submit to the severest sufferings, for the glory

[n] Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 ¶ [o] While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 The Lord said unto my Lord,

[n] Lev. xix, 18.

[o] Mark xii, 35; Luke xx, 41.

of God;—first, because of that full and entire satisfaction of soul, which it produces by bringing us into communion with God himself, and feeding its own strength, and the strength of every other virtue, by its devotional intercourses with him;—and first, as being the root and principle of every other act of obedience; without which it can have no genuineness of character, and is considered as but a formal hypocrisy before God. "They," says an old writer, "idly interpret this precept who state, that it obliges us only to love God as much as we can in our lapsed state. The fall of man lost God no right, nor abated any thing of the creature's duty. The law doth undoubtedly require us to love God in the highest degree, to be showed by the acts of the whole man, in obedience to all his commandments, and that constantly. It is our only hope, that this law is in the hands of a Mediator!" He hath procured pardon, upon our repentance and faith, for its violations; and again by his Spirit renews our nature to love God with all our hearts, and to serve him with all our strength.

Verse 39. *And the second is like unto it.*—Not equal, for it is the SECOND; but LIKE *unto it*, in having the superiority over all others, the first and great commandment alone excepted; and LIKE *to it*, as being a precept of LOVE, and an efflux from the same principle directed to our neighbour. Judging from these writings, the Jews appear to have been fond of numbering the precepts of the law; and some such practice may have obtained in our Lord's time. The Talmud reckons them at 613; of which 365 are negative, and 248 affirmative. Our Lord's enumeration is TWO, easily remembered, and embracing every species of obligation in its just and holy principle. There is nothing forbidden but what offends this law of love to God and man; nothing commanded but what is implied in it.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c.—However the Jews in their bigotry might restrain the term *neighbour* to those of their own nation, their "friends in the law," as the phrase was; our Lord's parable of the good Samaritan has taught us to extend it to every man, so that not even our enemies are excepted. *As thyself*, "as heartily and sincerely, and as a man would desire to be loved by his neighbour, and to do all the good offices to him he would choose to have done to himself by him. This law supposes that men should love themselves, so as to be careful of their bodies, families, and estates; and in a spiritual way, so as to be concerned for their souls, and their everlasting happiness: and in like manner should men love their neighbours; in things temporal doing them no injury, but all the good they can; and in things spiritual praying for them, instructing them, and advising them as they would their own souls."

Verse 40. *Hang all the law and the prophets.*—The law and the moral part of the prophetic writings, together with the discourses of our Lord and the writings of the apostles, contain a great number of particular precepts, all of which are bound upon us by the most solemn and indispensable obligation; and the knowledge of them is necessary for the guidance, so to speak, of the great affection of love to God and to our neighbour, into its particular and just operation. But all *hang*, depend, upon these two; so that they are the ROOT, and particular acts of obedience the BRANCHES. The supposed allusion, in these words, to the hanging up of tables of law in public places, adopted by some interpreters, is too far-fetched.

Verse 42. *What think ye of Christ? &c.*—The Pharisees had asked many questions of our Lord; and now, since they were collected about him in the temple, in the presence of the multitude, he proposes one to them; designing thereby to convict them of being in ignorance of the true character of Messiah, and to leave an impression of his superior nature upon the minds of his disciples, a truth as yet obscurely intimated, but which was soon to receive its strongest demonstration. *What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The son of David;* for in this they were all agreed, that the Messiah must be a descendant of David, of "his house and lineage," and the heir of his throne, which was promised to him by the mouth of the prophets.

Verse 43. *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?*—The phrase, *in spirit*, signifies, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as appears from St. Mark, who expresses it, "For David himself, by the Holy Ghost, said," &c. This proves both that David wrote Psalm cx, under Divine inspiration, and that it relates to the Messiah. The word κυριος answers to the Hebrew אדון, Adon,

[p] Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

[p] Psalm cx, 1.

which signifies lord or master, the title of a superior. David was a monarch, and had no earthly superior in rank; and besides, the Messiah, according to the flesh, was to be his Son; *how then*, in what sense, does *he call him Lord*, saying, "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand?" How could he be his Lord, who was not to be born until many ages afterward, and was certainly to have no secular dominion over him? This question the Pharisees could not answer, for indeed it admits of no reply but one, which should acknowledge the Divinity as well as the humanity of the Christ; for in no other sense but as God over all could he be David's Lord, his Lord then even before he was born into the world, and his Lord when he should be born, as ruling over the dead of all past ages, as well as over all living men. This ancient doctrine of the Jewish Church the Pharisees and Sadducees had, however, departed from; and as they had sunk into gross conceptions as to the kingdom of the Messiah, so they reduced their views of his character to a level with their worldly expectations. They now felt that their own Scriptures were against them, and it was this that silenced and confounded them; for it is added, *No man was able to answer him a word*. Their silence is, however, instructive to us. It shows that it was admitted among them that the words quoted related to the Messiah; so that the attempts of some of the more modern Jews to give them another application, are in denial of the opinion of their ancestors. It shows also, that the term LORD, as used by David, was not used, as the modern deniers of Christ's Divinity would have it, to express merely the office of the Messiah, so that with reference to the *dignity* of that office, David might call him Lord, though his descendant, and a mere man like himself. For why then did not the Pharisees make this reply? Nothing could have been easier, had the word borne that import only among them, and they would easily have escaped out of the difficulty of the question. "But they answered him not a word;" and thus tacitly confessed that they had embraced opinions respecting the Messiah irreconcilable with the declarations of their own sacred books, and with these words especially, which have no true comment but that which is contained in the words of the glorified Saviour himself, "I am the ROOT and the OFFSPRING of David, the bright and morning star."

Verse 46. *Neither durst any* man *from that day forth ask him any more* questions.—And thus our blessed Lord delivered himself from the intrusion of these captious and cavilling men, and was left to pursue his own great work without interruption to the time of his sufferings, which were now approaching; this being the third day before the pass over on which "he was sacrificed for us."

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *Christ admonisheth the people to follow the good doctrine, not the evil examples of the scribes and Pharisees.* 5 *His disciples must beware of their ambition.* 13 *He denounceth eight woes against their hypocrisy and blindness:* 34 *and prophesieth of the destruction of Jerusalem.*

1 THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

CHAPTER XXIII. Verse 1. *The multitude and his disciples.*—Both these had been auditors of his disputes with the Sadducees and Pharisees and to them he now more immediately addresses himself.

Verses 2, 3. *The scribes and the Pharisees, &c.*—That is, such of the Pharisees as were scribes, or professionally learned in the interpretation of the law. These are said to *sit in Moses' seat*, because the doctors of the law delivered their discourses in that position; and as Moses was the great and first teacher of their law, he is figuratively represented as *sitting* to deliver his oracles, to which seat of his those who interpreted his law as doctors, and enforced it as judges, succeeded. Hence the scribes sat on seats in the sanhedrim and inferior councils. It is to this, their JUDICIAL office, that our Lord exclusively alludes; but when, like any other rabbins, they founded schools and taught disciples, to attend upon them or to observe their decisions was purely optional; and against various doctrines which they taught

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4 [a] For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

[a] St. Luke, chap. xi, 46.

in this capacity, our Lord often strongly cautions his disciples, and often himself refutes their favourite tenets. As moral and religious teachers he held them in contempt, and taught his disciples so to regard them likewise; and that deservedly, for they were either always making void the moral law of God by their traditions; enforcing trivial rites, as though they were of the utmost importance; and toiling in intricate and endless disputes, "questions and strifes of words." In this capacity of religious teachers our Lord could not, therefore, exhort his disciples and the multitude to *observe and do whatsoever they bade them observe and do.* It was different with them as expounders of the law of Moses, in those branches only of which their synagogue courts and councils of different degrees of dignity up to the great sanhedrim took cognizance, which it was their office to make known to the people, and which were enforced by the courts under lighter or heavier penalties. Many of the superstitious and trifling ceremonies which they enjoined upon their "proselytes" in their other characters as doctors, rabbins, or teachers, under the general influence of their names as great and learned men, were designed to show them how to attain the highest degrees of merit and sanctity; but in their judicial capacity they were confined to the letter of the law, or its general directions, which, however, required explanation and accommodation to particular circumstances that might arise. In this there was little room for the play of their own superstitious fancies, because penalties were to be enforced upon disobedience, which must rest upon the letter of the law, not on private interpretation. Our Lord therefore respects this, their public office, because he was himself under the ceremonial and judicial law, and observed it; and as the time was not come for the abolition of the Mosaic institute, he enforced respect to their decisions upon his hearers, as still bound to the laws of Moses. Thus he prevented that offence which might have arisen from the idea that he was a subverter of the laws of his country. But while he enjoins respect to the scribes as magistrates and judges, he proceeds to caution the people against their bad personal example.

This shows how unfounded those interpretations of this passage are, which draw from our Lord's words a sanction and even an obligation to attend upon the instructions of bad ministers, provided their example be not followed; a notion which is founded upon the mistaken idea, that the scribes were the *authorized* preachers or religious teachers of the Jews, and exercised that office in religious assemblies of the synagogues. Of this there is no evidence whatever. In the synagogues prayers were offered, the appointed portion of Scripture read, and the interpretation of the Hebrew given in the common dialect, as literally as possible; but any one might address the people in exhortation. Many of the scribes, indeed, beside the judicial office they held in the Jewish courts, were public teachers of religion; but they had no authority for this from the law; none from inspiration, like the prophets; none from any public appointment. They took this office on their own authority, and trusted to their talents and character with the people to obtain disciples. It was only when they were introduced into the courts that they were vested with any authority; and then not as religious teachers, but as interpreters of the ceremonial and judicial law, and assessors with other judges. The whole foundation of the opinion, that men are bound by the words of Christ to attend a wicked ministry, is therefore baseless: on the contrary, he cautions his disciples from following the instructions of these very men in their assumed capacity of religious instructers, by declaring that "if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." It was only when they were in Moses' seat, in the chair of judicial authority, stating and enforcing the laws of Moses, that they were to be obeyed. But as to their example, it was to be shunned; for even those precepts of *righteousness* and *mercy* which Moses introduced into his law, although they enforced them upon others, they did not practise themselves; nor, as it would appear from what follows, did they even always observe those onerous and expensive ceremonials enjoined in the law which they were so zealous to uphold, and so strenuous to bind upon others. *They say and do not; they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers;* they will not take the least part of these burdens upon themselves. The words are not to be interpreted of those superstitious additions to the law which the scribes invented as constituting in their view a righteousness beyond the letter, for Christ would not have commanded his disciples "to observe and do them;" but the things truly commanded by the law of God, and particularly the ceremonial law, which is called, Acts xv, 10, "a yoke which neither our fathers nor

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: [b] they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 [c] And love the uppermost rooms at

[b] Num. xv, 38; Deut. xxii, 12.—[c] Mark xii, 38; Luke xi, 43.—[d] James iii, 1.

we were able to bear." Thus he declares their hypocrisy: in the next verse he reproves their religious affectation.

Verse 5. *Phylacteries.*—The Jews were commanded to bind the words of the law as a sign on their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes, Deut. vi, 8. These were strong figurative expressions, denoting the constant regard to be paid to the commands of God, which were never to be absent from the thoughts, and to be constantly referred to in order to regulate the conduct. But the Pharisees chose to interpret them literally, and to wear cases of parchment, into which they put written sentences of the law, and bound them upon the forehead and wrists. They are called in Greek phylacteries, from φυλαττω, to *guard* or *keep*, because they were used to preserve the law in memory, in order to its observance. The Hebrew term is תפלין, tephillin, or *prayers*, because these sentences were repeated at their devotions. The Pharisees wore these phylacteries, either broader than others, so that more might be written upon them, or they enlarged the case, so as to contain a greater number of sentences, so that they might appear to have a greater reverence for the law than others. The sentences written on the phylacteries are supposed to have been, Deut. vi, 1–9; Exodus xiii, 2–11, the eight last verses of the same chapter, and Deut. xi, 13–22.

Enlarge the borders of their garments.—The command to the Israelites to wear borders or fringes, κρασπεδα, on their garments, with a blue or purple band on the fringe, Num. xv, 38, could only be taken literally. It was probably designed to distinguish the Jews from other nations; and that, by looking upon it, and remembering that they were a peculiar people, they might be admonished to observe their laws. Our Lord conformed to the custom of his country in this respect; for what is translated "the *hem* of his garment," ought to have been rendered *the fringe*. It is said that the Jews still wear a small square piece, sewed on the inside of their clothes, with four purple tufts, in compliance with this precept. The Pharisees enlarged these fringes from the same motive as they enlarged their phylacteries, that they might seem exuberantly regardful of the Divine commands.

Verse 6. *Uppermost rooms.*—That is, the most honourable seats. The custom of reclining at meals on couches had been long introduced into Judea. These couches generally contained three persons each. The most honourable place was the middle part of the middle couch, and the second was at the top. In still more ancient times, however, this distinction of honourable places was observed. "And Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in *the chiefest place* among them that were bidden," 1 Samuel ix, 22.

The chief seats in the synagogues.—Seniority was the general rule of sitting in the synagogue; but respect being often shown to men learned in the law though younger in years, the scribes claimed that boldly and intrusively out of pure self-complacency, which had been sometimes rendered them through courtesy. In the synagogues the elders sat before the ark, or chest, in which the holy books were deposited, and the people in rows fronting them, so that "the faces of all the people," says Maimonides, "were toward the elders and the ark." It was this elevated position among the elders which the scribes and Pharisees affected in the synagogues, and even the chief seats there.

Verse 7. *Greetings in the markets.*—Ασπασμους εν ταις αγοραις, *salutations in the public places*. These salutations, short and simple among all in ancient times, had become disgustingly long and ceremonious, and especially when a person of superior rank was addressed. They were commenced at a distance, accompanied with various humble gestures, and continued till the parties met. These forms the scribes and Pharisees exacted of their disciples and the common people.

Rabbi, rabbi.—This word, which imports greatness or eminence, was doubled for the sake of the greater emphasis. Anciently it was only given to persons of superior civil rank, as magistrates and princes; nor was it assumed by any of the prophets or wise men among the Jews, till about the birth of Christ, when the pride of the Jewish doctors began to show itself more extravagantly. Our Lord was saluted by this title, Matt. xxvi, 25; from which some have conjectured very vainly that he had taken that degree in the Jewish schools, which is entirely contradicted by the question of the Jews when Christ was teaching in the temple, "Whence hath this man letters," or learning, "having never learned?" plainly meaning in the Jewish schools. And the

one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: [e] for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

[e] Mal. i, 6.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 [f] And whosoever shall exalt him-

[f] Luke xiv, 11; xviii, 14.

argument of Vitringa, that unless he had so passed the schools he could not have preached in the temple and synagogues, is built upon a mistake; for any Jew might thus teach publicly, and even in the synagogue, by permission of the ruler. If, therefore, our Lord suffered himself to be called rabbi, we may conclude that, as a matter of courtesy to a superior, this title was not forbidden, any more than he condemns courteous salutations, because he reproves those elaborate and humiliating forms of *greetings* which the scribes and Pharisees affected. With these assuming men, the title rabbi is to be understood as a recognition of their office and authority as religious teachers; and it is for this reason that it is reproved by our Lord, and their example is forbidden to be imitated by his disciples. That it was assumed under this view appears from what follows, when our Lord equally forbids them to call any man *father* and *master*, καθηγητης, *guide;* which, with rabbi, were the titles the Jewish doctors assumed; for the Talmud pretends "that King Jehoshaphat used to salute the wise men with the titles, Father, father; Rabbi, rabbi; Master, master," which, however false as an historical fact, shows what the titles they affected were. Now our Lord, instead of conceding them to be authorized teachers of religion, by prohibiting his disciples from giving them these titles under this character, not as matter of civil respect, wholly disallows their authority to exercise this office, tacitly pronounces it an assumption, and warns his disciples from imitating them. This will confirm what was said in a preceding note as to the import of their "sitting in Moses' seat."

Be not ye called rabbi, &c.—Though the disciples were to be constituted public teachers, this was only as *servants* conveying the words of their Master only to the people, without any mixture of their own. The Jewish teachers assumed an authority to set up tradition above the law, to pervert its meaning, and to make additions to it, on the sole authority of their own pretended wisdom. But the disciples were only to speak the words of another; and all titles, therefore, complimentary to their own wisdom, and which indicated any authority arising from their personal qualifications, were specially forbidden to them. This explains the reasons of the prohibition which follows: *One is your Master*, there is but one *teacher, even Christ;* and all ye are brethren, placed on equality in this respect, that ye are but the channels of communicating the wisdom ye receive from above to others: *and call no man your* FATHER *upon earth;* for *one is your Father*, a term here used also in the sense of *instructer, which is in heaven:* neither be ye called *guides; for one is your guide, even Christ.*

One is your Master.—The received text reads καθηγητης; but the Vatican, and many other MSS., have διδασκαλος, *teacher*, which is probably the true reading, as otherwise there would be a repetition in verse 10.

Even Christ.—Ο Χριστος is omitted by Griesbach, and is wanting in several of the versions, and a few MSS.; but the evidence in its favour greatly preponderates. As Campbell, however, observes, "it makes no difference in the sense, because if not read, the context manifestly supplies it."

Verse 9. *Call no man father, &c.*—That is, in the sense in which the scribes and Pharisees use the term, which also was with them a reverential designation of themselves as eminent and authoritative INSTRUCTERS. Thus the Jews say, "The wise men are the fathers of us all;" and we read in their writings, not only Rabbi Saul, and Rabbi Jose, but Abba Saul, Abba Gorion, &c.

Verse 10. *Neither be ye called masters.*—Καθηγηται, *guides*, in the sense of affording direction by instruction. All these titles were nearly of the same import, were assumed for the same reason, and the pretence built upon by them is therefore beaten down by our Lord by their being equally prohibited. As our Lord knew that human nature was in all fallen and corrupt, but proud and ambitious, he adds, *But he that is greatest among you, let him be your servant;* thereby striking at the root of that vanity which gave rise among the Jewish teachers to this assumption of vain titles, and teaching that, in his religion, true greatness lies only in self-abasement, and honour in service.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, &c.—This is the standing rule of the Divine administration. It was illustrated in the humiliation of the proud scribes and doctors of Judea, and in the glory put upon the humble teachers sent forth by our Lord. It often appears conspicuously in God's dispensations to individuals and to nations; and an attentive observer will see it perhaps more uniformly illustrated by facts than any other principle of God's moral government in the present life. Even this was often noticed by the heathen, as appears from various pas-

self shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 ¶ [g] But wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 [h] Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea

[g] Luke xi, 52.

[h] Mark xii, 40; Luke xx, 47.

sages both in Greek and Latin authors. "Do you see," says one, "how the loftiest houses and the highest trees are struck by the thunder? For God loves to cut short whatever rises superior." "God suffers no one to have lofty thoughts but himself."

Verse 13. *But wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, &c.*—Our Lord here assumes his office as Judge of men, and authoritatively pronounces a succession of *woes* upon this wretched class of hypocrites and deceivers.

Shut the kingdom of heaven.—The kingdom of heaven is here the spiritual kingdom of Messiah, the Gospel dispensation. It had been opened by the joint preaching of John the Baptist and our Lord; and the people were on the point of entering in, but were hindered by the envious and malignant attempts of these false teachers to excite their prejudices and pervert their minds. Their example, their doctrine, especially their false interpretation of the prophecies, and their authority, were all employed to keep men from embracing that heavenly doctrine which they themselves rejected and despised.

Verse 14. *Ye devour widows' houses.*—Οικιας, *houses*, is here used by metonymy for property. They made a prey of weak superstitious women who, being widows, had no protectors, and had property at their own disposal. And this they did under pretence of the greatest sanctity, making long and frequent prayers, and that so publicly, both in the synagogues and public places, as to be seen and praised of men. We learn the length of their prayers from Maimonides, who says, that "the ancient holy men used to stay an hour before prayer, and an hour after prayer, and spent an hour in prayer. Those who would be accounted the holiest, used to do this three times a day, thus occupying nine hours a day,"—a hard service when the heart was not right with God. "For one to be long in his prayer," says the Talmud, "is an excellence." Yet, says our Lord, for these long prayers—because they were made for a pretext, in order to carry on covetous and rapacious designs more effectually,—ye shall receive *greater*, more extreme *damnation*. Let it be remarked that neither is length nor shortness of prayer censured or approved. What Christ condemns is simply the hypocrisy, *the pretence*, or disguise, intended by them. Prayers may be long or short, according to the occasion and circumstances.

Verse 15. *Ye compass sea and land, &c.*—This is a proverbial expression, used to denote the most strenuous exertions to accomplish an object. Proselytes are generally reckoned of two kinds; the first proselytes of the covenant, or of righteousness, who were converts made from the Gentiles to Judaism, submitted to circumcision, and in every respect conformed to the law.—The rule of Moses, with respect to these, was, that they should be "as those born in the land;" that is, be reckoned as Jews.—But many strangers and aliens dwelt among the Jews, on condition of their not practising idolatry, nor worshipping any other God beside Jehovah; and refraining from labour on the Jewish Sabbath; and were permitted to pay their worship to God in the outer court of the temple, or court of the Gentiles, but separated from the other courts by a "wall of partition." These the later rabbins have called proselytes of the gate, obliged to observe the seven precepts of Noah, (which, however, are nowhere to be found but in their writings,) but not to conform to the law generally. The learned in Jewish antiquities are now, however, generally agreed that this distinction of proselytes of the gate had no existence, and that those only could with propriety be styled proselytes who fully embraced the Jewish religion.

That great zeal was shown after the captivity of Babylon, by the Jews, both in Palestine and in all the Greek and Roman cities where they were established, to bring the Gentiles from the worship of idols to serve the true God, appears from various circumstances and the statements of many writers; and that they succeeded to a great extent, is shown from the Acts of the Apostles, where we see that many of these Gentile proselytes were among the first to receive the Gospel in several principal cities. This zeal appears also to have been, in many, a very pious one, and to have given rise to efforts which God was pleased to crown with success, so that the light of the Old Testament Scriptures and of religion was largely diffused through the civilized world, and signally served to prepare the way for the dissemination of Christianity. The worst men among the Jews appear to have been the

and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Wo unto you, *ye* blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is * guilty.

19 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [i] for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have

* Or, *debtor*, or, *bound*.

[i] Luke xi, 42.

scribes and Pharisees of Judea, and especially those of Jerusalem; and their zeal in making proselytes could only be mischievous. They had a wide field of labour among the multitudes of Gentiles who resided among them; but their conversion to Judaism, when effected by them, was but the exchange of one superstition for another; and the teachers being vicious, the converts were rendered like them. Still, however, it is doubtful whether the word proselytes here is not used merely for those disciples whom these doctors, by every effort, endeavoured to collect from among their own people, being anxious to exhibit a long train of followers, devoted to their opinions, and employed in proclaiming the fame of their wisdom. The Hebrew word for proselyte, indeed, denotes one who comes from abroad; and the Greek, one who comes, generally meaning from a foreign people; but the term proselyte might be used in an adapted sense for the followers of the different rabbins, who had left their families or other teachers, to attend upon their favourite master.

Twofold more the child of hell, &c.—Being filled with uncharitable zeal, the character of corrupt proselytes, and trained up by a wicked sophistry, which palliated vice, and substituted ceremony for piety, to practise evil with less remorse, and with greater subtlety, than in their former condition, whether Gentiles or Jews. A child of hell, *υιον γεεννης*, is one like Satan in his disposition, and doomed to the same punishment.

Verse 16. *Blind guides.*—Guides that lead astray; referring not so much to their ignorance, as to their wilful and perverting casuistry, and especially in the sacred matter of oaths; thus ensnaring the consciences of men, and, by confounding the distinctions of right and wrong, making even conscience an ally of vice, which is the most hopeless state into which men can fall. Of this our Lord gives instances. They taught that *whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing*; meaning that the oath has no force, and may be violated with impunity; *but whosoever shall swear by the* GOLD *of the temple*, not the golden ornaments, but the gold of the treasury, and the valuable golden vessels, which, as votive-offerings, were deposited within it, *he is a debtor*, he is bound, and commits the sin of perjury if he performs not his oath. The reason of this distinction was, that they might inculcate the idea that peculiar sanctity attached to these gifts to the temple, and so heighten the supposed meritoriousness of presenting them. The peculiar sanctity of gifts for sacred uses, and the binding nature of the oaths made by them, was held also by the Greeks and Romans. By the latter, they were called *donaria*; by the former *αναθηματα*, from their being placed in conspicuous situations so as to be admired, and to induce others to make their gifts splendid and worthy of observation. Thus all the mere religions of ceremony bear the same degenerate characters. These corrupt teachers made similar distinctions between swearing by the altar and that which was offered upon it; and swearing by heaven, and by God himself; but our Lord dissipates all these sophistical distinctions, by at once declaring that every oath, every appeal to any object whatever for the truth of what is affirmed, is in fact an appeal to the God of all creatures, the witness and judge of men, and the sure avenger of deceit and perjury. See the note on chap. v, 33.

Verse 23. *For ye pay tithe of mint, &c.*—By the law, a tenth of all FRUITS was set apart for the priests; but by this it was not understood that insignificant herbs were included, as not properly coming under that denomination, and being of little value. The Pharisees, however, in their affectation of being more scrupulous in the observance of the law than others, or seeking to increase the merit of their righteousness by a work of

omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 *Ye* blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [k] for ye make clean

[k] St. Luke, chap. xi, 39.

supererogation, gave the tithe of *mint, anise,* (rather *dill, ανηθον,*) and *cummin.* These are mentioned as specimens; for St. Luke adds, "all manner of herbs." That the law did not require them to pay tithe of herbs appears from the Talmud, where it is said, "The tithing of corn is from the law, the tithing of herbs from the rabbins."

Weightier matters of the law, &c.—These are said by St. Matthew to be *judgment, mercy, and faith;* by St. Luke, more briefly, "judgment and the love of God." Both are of the same import: JUDGMENT is justice, giving to all their due; MERCY is that pity for the distressed which leads to the administration of bountiful relief; and FAITH must be understood of a devout confidence in God.—Many eminent commentators indeed take faith here in the sense of fidelity; so Calvin, "*Mihi non est ambiguum quin veritatem erga homines designet;*" but this is manifestly comprehended in justice. Now both mercy, and faith in God, are included in the "love of God;" and they necessarily suppose it as the only source from which, when genuine, they can flow. St. Luke therefore sums up both in that high and practical affection. By that are we rendered tender and compassionate to others; and he that loves God supremely must confide in him absolutely. Of these hallowed affections, which constitute the very substance and reality of religion, the heart of a Pharisee was wholly destitute, and the very rigidness of his attention to trifling matters in religion only served to turn his thoughts from its great and vital principles. Our Lord, in speaking of these as "the *weightier* matters of the law," probably adverted to their distinguishing the legal precepts into "weighty" and "light." With them the true order was reversed, and moral duties and vital religious affections were postponed to trivial observances. The true order was restored by our great Teacher for the instruction of his disciples in all ages.—"These WEIGHTIER matters" *ought ye to have done; and not to have left the other undone.* This last clause, however, is not to be interpreted into a sanction, by our Lord, of this superstitious and self-righteous payment of a tithe on herbs. It is a concession on their own principles; for to pay tenths of these things was a trifling matter in itself, and might be innocently observed or not, according to the principle which actuated each individual; but allowing them that they ought to do this, "judgment, mercy, and faith," were the duties bound upon their consciences, and which could not be neglected without the highest guilt and danger. Our Lord, in this passage, appears to allude to Micah vi, 6–8, where the superior acceptableness to God of moral habits and acts to sacrifices and offerings themselves, however costly, is forcibly expressed.

Verse 24. *Which strain at a gnat.*—To *strain,* does not here signify a difficult attempt to swallow, but to strain off or out; the meaning of the verb used, *διυλιζειν,* being to *filter* or *percolate.* Accordingly, in the older English translations, it is rendered by "strain out." The Septuagint, in Amos vi, 6, uses *διυλισμηλον οινον,* from which it appears that it was the practice of the Jews to filter their wine; which was done, not only to free it from the insects which in warm climates infest every open vessel in which any thing to their taste is exposed, but also because the Jews reckoned flies in the number of unclean animals, as being accounted a "creeping thing," Lev. xi, 41. "One that eats a flea or a gnat," says the Talmud, "is an apostate;" and many other passages show the ridiculous importance which they attached to this construction of the Levitical law against "creeping things." The *κωνωψ,* which is said to be bred in the lees of wine, is probably the same as the wine gnat of the Talmudists. Our Lord's meaning is explained by the connection of this with the preceding verse. Their consciences made a scruple of trifling faults against rules laid down by fallible men; such as paying tithe of herbs, which at best was but a very doubtful duty; while they lived in the ready commission of flagrant violations of the greatest and most weighty precepts of the law of God. Thus they assiduously strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel, or elephant; for the Jews had both proverbs. For this reason, also, our Lord calls them *blind guides,* as they surely must in all ages be deemed who, in conducting others, so stumble in a plain path, and yet walk fearlessly over a precipice; in other words, who fill men's consciences with scruples as to things indifferent, and sear them as with a hot iron, rendering them wholly insensible to great transgressions.

Verse 25. *Make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter.*—The allusion here is not to the purification of vessels and cups used at meals, in which indeed they were somewhat superstitiously exact; but our Lord speaks metaphorically, and compares them to those who should cleanse the outside only

the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

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of a vessel, while its interior, the most important part to be kept in a state of cleanliness, was left filthy. Thus the Pharisees were scrupulously careful of external and ceremonial purity, practising all the prescribed ablutions with due attention, and maintaining in all things a fair show of piety; but within they were *full*, a strong expression, of *extortion and excess*. The word here rendered excess is ακρασια, *intemperance*.—Griesbach reads αδικιας, *injustice*; which, however, but repeats the same thought by another word. The general word ακρασια comprehends excess of every kind, whether of the passions or the bodily appetites; to both which many of the scribes and Pharisees, notwithstanding their "form of godliness," were secretly addicted. In some MSS. we have *uncleanness*, in others *covetousness*, and in others *wickedness*.

Whited sepulchres.—The public burying places of the Jews were without the cities. The more opulent hewed them out of rocks in their own grounds, and ornamented them. Graves are distinguished by Jewish writers into *deep sepulchres*, to which answers Luke xi, 44, "graves that appear not;" and *marked* or *painted sepulchres*. These, beside their architectural or other ornaments, were marked with resemblances of bones in chalk, annually renewed on the fifteenth of the month of Adar, that priests, Nazarites, and travellers might avoid the pollution of touching them. Many of these tombs, especially those erected in honour of prophets and kings, were grand and beautiful. A stronger metaphor than this, or one more just, cannot be conceived. As an adorned tomb is but a garniture of death and corruption, which at once marks them and makes them noticeable; so the external sanctity of the Pharisees was in disgusting contrast with their inward turpitude, and, when once exposed by our Lord, became, in the eyes of his followers, a visible sign of that *hypocrisy and iniquity* which they were thus taught to avoid, lest they should be morally contaminated, as the Jews were ceremonially polluted by graves, and whatever appertained to the dead. The mark of spiritual death was upon these false teachers, who were to be avoided as a pollution.

Verse 29. *Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish*, beautify *the sepulchres of the righteous*.—To honour illustrious men by building them splendid tombs has been the practice of all civilized nations, and prevailed among the Jews. Extraordinary honours were paid to the tombs of Mordecai and Esther; Herod repaired the tomb of David with great splendour; and the Pharisees, among popular acts, both erected sepulchral monuments to the different prophets who had appeared in their nation, and added new ornaments to those still standing. It was the eulogy of a rabbi by one of his disciples, that he had adorned the sepulchres of Adam and of Abraham. And such was their sacredness, that the rule was, "All sepulchres might be removed but those of a king and a prophet." St. Jerome speaks of the tombs of several of the prophets as in existence in his day. We are not to understand that our Lord condemns any thing in this practice but its hypocrisy, as far as the Pharisees were implicated. By these acts they professed their veneration for those ancient prophets, and yet wholly disregarded their words: they said, in doing this, *If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets;* and yet they persecuted John the Baptist, the acknowledged prophet of their own day, and were even at that moment plotting and confederating to take away the life of Christ. "Wherefore," says our Lord, "ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye are the sons of them that killed the prophets;" the force of which observation arises from the term children or sons, υιοι, signifying not only DESCENDANTS, but IMITATORS, or persons of the same dispositions. It is as though he had said, "The spirit in which ye do these hypocritical honours to the prophets of old confesses not only that ye are descended lineally from haters and murderers of good men: so that the disgrace of being of a sanguinary and persecuting ancestry attaches to you; but

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto

that you inherit also their hatred of the truth and their malevolent temper."

Verse 32. *Fill ye up then, &c.*—There is no reason for considering this imperative as used for a future indicative, *ye will fill up, &c.*, which renders the passage tame and spiritless. The words express *hopeless abandonment:* the case of this class of men had become desperate; they had set themselves to resist all conviction; and now, after repeated warnings and calls, they are utterly renounced by Christ, and surrendered to the power of their sins. The force of this expression is therefore most natural, and indicates strong emotion: "Go, since ye are yourselves wilfully bent upon it, and since ye reject all counsel, and contemn every effort to bring you to a better mind, fill up the measure of your fathers: ye have rejected me, and I now solemnly and judicially reject you." Our Lord, in these words, intimates the punishment of the Jewish nation of which the scribes and Pharisees were the ecclesiastical leaders, and whose corrupting doctrines the people generally approved. There is a *measure* of sins which when filled up never fails to bring down upon nations the special visitations of judgment. To fill up this measure is seldom the work of one age. Successive generations adopt the principles, and imitate the practices of their ancestors, adding "sin to sin, and iniquity to iniquity," until either by the natural consequence of such public vices as tend to subvert the strength and security of society, or by the special visitations of Divine vengeance, now no longer corrective, but in the strictest sense penal, they receive the full reward of their sins. The punishment of individuals may be deferred to another life; but nations, who are treated under the Divine administration as political persons, have no existence but in time, and in this life therefore are rewarded according to their works; subject, however, to this consideration, that they, as well as individuals, are under a mediatorial government, receive greater blessings than they could claim of right, are treated with "much long suffering," and can turn away God's anger by repentance and prayer. But when that point is once reached, beyond which it is inconsistent with the character of a wise and righteous government, though founded in mercy, to extend impunity, *the measure is full*, and the terribleness of the judgments of God proves to all the world, that none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. This *measure* was filled up by the Jews, in rejecting the offers of mercy made them by the publication of the Gospel throughout the land by the apostles and disciples of our Lord, after the day of pentecost. Many indeed were gathered into the Christian Church; but the majority, still influenced by the increased malignity and persecuting spirit of their chief men and ecclesiastical leaders, not only rejected Christianity with contempt, but were enraged to fierce opposition and blasphemies, because of the calling of the Gentiles.

Verse 33. *Ye serpents, &c.*—The character of the hypocrites he reproves is here marked by our Lord in the express terms of his servant John the Baptist. See note on Matt. iii, 7. These words were uttered not in anger, but in the spirit of calm piercing judgment, by him who knew the hearts of men, and as it has often been justly observed, afford no precedent to justify us in using harsh terms in reproving the most notorious sinners. John the Baptist acted and spoke under special inspiration; our Lord spoke as a sovereign and a judge. We are to deal faithfully with men in showing them their true character, and endeavouring to open their eyes to their spiritual dangers; but we are to remember that we, who address them, are their fellow sinners. To us it belongs to instruct, persuade, and reason; but it does not belong to us to pronounce the sentence.

How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?—How shall ye escape capital conviction? the phrase *αποφυγειν κρισιν* being used for escaping condemnation in a court of judicature. Here, too, the punishment is stated: it is that of *γεεννα, the fire of hell*, which figuratively denotes the terribleness of that visitation which overwhelmed their city and nation in unheard of calamities, and literally the punishment to which they individually rendered themselves obnoxious in a future life. See note on chapter v, 22.—The phrase, "the judgment of damnation of hell," often occurs in the Talmud for future torment, and the everlasting wrath of God.

Verse 34. *Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, &c.*—The words *δια τουτο* can scarcely be understood in any other way than as marking the connection of the discourse. The prophets, &c., were not sent to heighten the condemnation of the Pharisees; but their persecution is introduced as a farther illustration of the character of these bad men, and as justifying the severity of the sentence which Christ denounces against them. At the same time it ought to be remembered that it was no impeachment of the justice of God, when he had ends of mercy to accomplish as to others, to send

you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the

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his ministers among the Jews, although he foresaw that the result would be to excite the wicked scribes and Pharisees to more malignant opposition, and that it would hasten the filling up of their iniquities. These were not the reasons of their being sent, but the contrary; yet, in Scripture idiom, the UNDESIGNED EFFECT is sometimes expressed, as though it had been the FINAL CAUSE.—See the note on chap. x, 34. *Prophets, wise men, and* SCRIBES were the three classes of public teachers among the Jews, and held by them in the highest reverence; and these venerated names he now transfers to the humble fishermen of Galilee, who, by his teaching and inspiration, were to be raised above the greatest of the PROPHETS, the wisest of their WISE MEN, and the most learned of their SCRIBES; who were to displace all those lofty pretenders to a wisdom by which the world knew not God, and to become the infallible guides of men, in the affairs of religion, in all ages, and the only authorized teachers of his Church. Yet these Divinely qualified men were rejected, though "filled with the Holy Ghost," and though they wrought "signs and wonders among the people" to attest their mission from God. Stephen they stoned; James was cut off by the sword; Peter and other apostles were scourged. Our Lord adds, *Some ye shall crucify*, referring probably both to his own death, and the like punishment inflicted upon some of his disciples in Judea, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, not recorded.

Verse 35. *That upon you may come all the righteous blood, &c.*—The blood of Abel is specially mentioned, because it is said to cry from the ground to God. For the same reason, the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias is mentioned; by whom is probably meant the Zechariah mentioned in 2 Chron. xxiv, 20–22; for though he is there called the son of Jehoiada, the Jews, as it has been well remarked, had frequently two names, and especially when the name Jehovah entered into the composition of one of them; thus Jehoiakim is called Eliakim, 2 Kings xxiii, 34. This Zechariah is the only one of that name of whom mention is made in Scripture, as having fallen a victim to his fidelity in declaring the truth. He, when "he died, said, The Lord LOOK upon it, and require it;" so that both cases mentioned, that of Abel and that of Zacharias, are those of men persecuted to death for righteousness' sake, and whose deaths were expressly connected with the awful circumstance, a cry to heaven for RIGHTEOUS RETRIBUTION. The conjectures of commentators as to the other persons of this name are without foundation, that especially which would refer it prophetically to a Jew called Zacharias who was slain by the Jewish zealots in the temple a little before the destruction of Jerusalem; an irrelevant fact, which has been singled out under the false assumption that our Lord's words in this verse mean that the Jews of that generation were to be held guilty of the blood of all righteous men, from Abel downward, to the last righteous blood shed by the Jews before their city was destroyed. This is not only a monstrous supposition, but plainly contrary to that principle of the Divine government which is so expressly laid down in the words, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation, of them that hate me." Besides, that the Jews should be held particularly responsible for the blood of Abel, when they stood in no nearer relation to him than the persecutors of good men of any other nation, cannot be conceived; and that they should be chargeable with even the murder of those prophets whom their fathers put to death, when our Lord himself declares that they disavowed the deeds of their ancestors in this respect, although they would act as to him and his disciples in a similar manner, is as little reconcilable with the known equity of the Divine proceedings. The interpretations founded upon this view of the meaning of our Lord's words create, therefore, a difficulty which does not exist. Their meaning is, that the VENGEANCE of all the righteous blood shed upon earth, from Abel to Zacharias, should come upon that generation; that is, a punishment equal to the accumulated woes brought upon men for the crime of rejecting the truth, and persecuting its righteous preachers in all these ages, should be heaped upon the devoted heads of the Jews. And this was an act of manifest justice, since they put one infinitely greater than all the prophets to death, even the Messiah himself; and in opposition to stronger evidences of a Divine mission than any former prophets had given, wreaked their persecuting hate both upon him and his disciples. The punishments brought upon the Jews bear a remarkable correspondence to those inflicted both upon the murderer of Abel, and upon those of Zacharias. The Jews have borne, ever since the subversion of their nation by the Romans, the curse of Cain; a "mark" has been set upon them; and "fugitives" and "vagabonds" have they been in the earth. And as in consequence of the

righteous blood shed upon the earth, [l] from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 [m] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, [n] and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would [o] I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

[l] Gen. iv, 8.—[m] Luke xiii, 34.

[n] 2 Chron. xxiv, 21.—[o] 2 Esdras i, 30.

murder of Zechariah, at the command of Joash, "the host of Syria came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people," so it was; only in a severer degree, in the Roman invasion. And with respect to other prophets, "because they mocked his messengers, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy; therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand: and all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord,—all these he brought to Babylon; and they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all the palaces thereof with fire," &c., 2 Chron. xxxvi, 16–19. This too was realized with aggravated severity, and this terrible type of vengeance was accomplished in an accumulation of similar woes when the prophetic words of our Lord in the text were fully accomplished. These especially were the calamities which Christ had in view when he adds, *Verily I say unto you, that all these things shall come upon this generation.*—But these terrible denunciations proceed from no resentment, no indignant feeling at the wrongs he himself had endured; they are wrung from this lover of his country, this lover of the souls of his own people, by the stern necessity of reluctant justice; and they are uttered amid the heavings of compassion and sorrow.

Verse 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, &c.*—Every part of this apostrophe is charged with feeling and beauty. The repetition of the word Jerusalem, denoting how intensely the mind was fixed upon an object of interest; the comparison of his own intense desire to save the people of his own nation from these impending calamities, with the restless anxiety of the parent bird to shelter her brood, from birds of prey, under her wings; the frequency of his calls and warnings: and the despairing conclusion—*and ye would not!* are all deeply touching. Nor is this expression of our blessed Saviour's compassion to be confined to the Jews. It is an exhibition of his character instructive to all ages. It was this tender concern for human salvation which brought him from heaven, and carried him through his painful course of humiliation, shame, and sorrow; and now every annunciation of his Gospel is a call to us to the shelter of his wings from impending danger. He WOULD *gather us together* there, and be our eternal refuge from the vengeance which we have so justly provoked; and if we are not saved, this is not only against his intention, but his anxious attempts and most sincere endeavours to bring us, by the use of a variety of means, to a better mind. I WOULD AND YE WOULD NOT, are words which at once declare the fulness of his grace, and place the sole and aggravated fault of the final destruction of men upon themselves alone.

Verse 38. *Behold, your house, &c.*—House, οικος, is here used for the city of Jerusalem, the words being manifestly taken from Jeremiah xxii, 5, "But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, *that this house shall become a desolation,*" οτι εις ερημωσιν εσται ο οικος ουτος; which is another indication that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and the deportation of the people from the land, were a type of the still severer punishment inflicted by Roman severity. The word οικος is used not only in this enlarged sense, but for *country*. So also the Latins use *domus*.

Verse 39. *Ye shall not see me henceforth, &c.*—The word απ' αρτι is, in Matt. xxvi, 64, rendered *hereafter:* and, in the sense of *henceforth*, it cannot certainly be taken here, because they saw him many times after this, *After a while* best expresses the meaning.—*Ye shall not after a while see me, until ye shall say, &c.*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—These words imply the acknowledgment of our Lord by the Jews as the Messiah. In these terms the multitudes that attended his entry into Jerusalem saluted him, and joined them with their "Hosanna to the Son of David." They cannot there-

fore relate to his *coming* in his vengeance to destroy Jerusalem, for then the Jews did not more acknowledge him in his judgments than before; nor can they be so properly referred to his coming to judge the world, as to that acknowledgment of him as the Christ by the Jews as a people, which shall long precede that event. His COMING, therefore, is here to be taken in a spiritual sense; and the words contain a remarkable instance of a threatening and a promise, and that each of the most emphatic import, being couched under the same terms. A long and dark interval was to take place in which they should not SEE him, have no perception of the truth of his mission, and be separated from his peculiar mercies,—a long night in which they should wander in ignorance and unbelief, denationalized, unchurched, and deserted by God; but still ultimately they shall SEE him in all the demonstrations of his divinity and redeeming offices, shall acknowledge him as the true Christ, and take up that very acclamation of the multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem, at which their fathers were maddened into rage, and cry with them, *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: 3 what and how great calamities shall be before it: 29 the signs of his coming to judgment. 36 And because that day and hour is unknown, 42 we ought to watch like good servants, expecting every moment our Master's coming.

1 AND [a] Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, [b] There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of

[a] Mark xiii, 1; Luke xxi, 5.

[b] Luke xix, 44.

CHAPTER XXIV. Verse 1. *Departed from the temple.*—He had delivered the preceding discourses in the court of the temple: he now departs from it, to enter it no more, taking only, as it would seem, his disciples with him. These, as they were departing, *came to him*; that is, drew near to him, soliciting his attention *to the buildings of the temple.* The temple was repaired, beautified, and enlarged by Herod; yet, as the old materials remained, and he was many years in accomplishing the work, proceeding by degrees, so that the services of the temple were not interrupted, it was never considered as another and distinct building from the former, but was always named "the second temple." Having a questionable title to his throne, he thought by his munificence in this respect to secure the regard of the Jews. They, indeed, greatly admired his work. "They who never saw the temple of Herod," say the rabbins, "never saw a beautiful work." Its splendour is praised also by Tacitus, by Philo, and Josephus.

Verse 2. *Not one stone upon another.*—How literally this was accomplished is shown by Josephus, who had no intention of confirming our Lord's predictions, but narrates the matter as a mere historian. The orders of Cesar were to demolish the whole city and temple. This was done, except three towers and a part of the western wall. But the words of our Lord are, *There shall not be left here one stone upon another*; and accordingly we find the very foundations themselves afterward dug up by the Roman general left by Titus in command of the army; and Maimonides bears witness that the very site of the temple was "ploughed up," and that thus the words were accomplished, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field." Who then could foresee but an omniscient Being, that one stone of this vast fabric, of the most massive masonry, should not be left upon another? No human motive could be imagined for so remorseless a demolition of this sacred and most splendid fabric. In proportion as it was strong as a fortress, the preservation of it was important to the victors, as by that they might overawe the country; and the Romans were so tolerant of foreign religions, that they could not be influenced in the act by a fanatic bigotry. On the contrary, this renowned edifice had been treated by their commanders with veneration, and we learn from Josephus that Titus himself had been anxious to preserve it. But an evil spirit had impelled the Jews, during the siege, to that infatuated obstinacy, and to those reckless atrocities, which excited the besiegers themselves also to more than superhuman rage and malignity; and thus, in this strife of diabolical passions on each side, the wrath of man, losing sight of every consideration but that of revenge, accomplished, unwittingly, the purpose and the word of God. In the whole there was

Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

the overruling hand of God. The temple was to be destroyed, in order to effect a complete dispersion of the Jews; for from that time they had no common bond of union. It was a marked punishment also for their superstition, because they trusted in that house and its ceremonies as the sure pledge to them of the Divine favour, instead of securing his friendship and blessing by a real piety. The demolition of the temple was also a standing proof that the Messiah, who was by his presence to make the second house more glorious than the first, although it wanted the shechinah, and the Urim and Thummim, had already come; and it showed how vain was every hope of any other Messiah beside our Lord, seeing that the temple in which the true Christ was to appear had been utterly destroyed. It produced, finally, the total subversion of the Jewish Church; for as such it could not exist, its place of sacrifice being razed to the ground, and its priesthood abolished; and thus was terminated, not *mystically*, but in *reality*, the Levitical dispensation, the rites of which could only be performed in the temple at Jerusalem.

Verse 3. *Sat upon the mount of Olives.*—From this situation there was a full view of Jerusalem across the intervening valley, and no spot so appropriate could have been selected for the delivery of that series of prophecies which immediately follows. The place was retired; the disciples who were to be the depositories of this wonderful prediction were alone with him, *privately;* and the very scene of the calamities and horrors, which he depicts in words of awful majesty and solemn pathos, lay stretched before them. The disciples who came to him privately are said, by St. Mark, to be "Peter and James, and John and Andrew."

When shall these things be?—The total destruction of the temple just spoken of was doubtless first intended in the things respecting which they inquired; but they properly associated with so great a calamity many other events which they knew must be necessarily concomitant.

The sign of thy coming.—It is difficult to say what idea the disciples attached to the coming of Christ. They looked every moment for a more glorious personal manifestation of Christ as the Messiah; and might connect with that his taking a signal vengeance upon his enemies. But when our Lord speaks of his coming, it is to be remembered that he uses the phrase in three views. 1. A spiritual manifestation either to his disciples, or to the world by his Gospel. 2. His invisible agency as Judge in bringing total destruction upon the impenitent nation of the Jews, through the instrumentality of the Roman armies. 3. His final visible and glorious second advent to judge the world of wicked men; of which, almost throughout the following prophecies, he makes the destruction of the Jews a type and prophecy.

And of the end of the world.—The phrase συντελειας του αιωνος, *the end of the age*, refers in the language of the Jews both to the coming of Messiah, and to the end of time, and is used in both senses in the New Testament. Here the disciples appear to employ it for that glorious manifestation of their Master which they anticipated; one of honour and glory to them, and destruction to his enemies. This question appears therefore of nearly the same import as the preceding. They, as above observed, had as yet no very definite ideas on this subject; but our Lord replies to the question, by speaking of his coming to take vengeance on the Jews, but expresses this in terms which carry us above that event to the general judgment.—Throughout these prophecies we therefore trace an immediate and ultimate sense, one subordinate to the other, but that so arranged that sometimes the lower event is spoken of exclusively, sometimes the higher, and occasionally both are comprehended in the same expressions, which must then have a higher and a lower acceptation. This is quite in the manner of many of the ancient prophecies; and this peculiarity must be regarded, if either they or the following predictions of our Lord, delivered in the most elevated style of prophecy, can be satisfactorily and truly interpreted.

Verse 4. *Take heed that no man deceive you.*—He first cautions them against those false pretenders to the Messiahship, who should mislead many of the Jews; because they would flatter their expectations of a worldly kingdom, and promise them deliverance from the yoke of the hated Romans. Both these feelings formed so strong a passion with the Jews, that they were easily led to join the ranks of any pretender; and Christ's followers are admonished to *take heed*, because their carnal and national prejudices were also strong; and under their infatuating influence they also might be seduced from attachment to a religion wholly spiritual,—one, too, which would appear antinational, as containing threatenings of the entire overthrow of their state and nation.

Verse 5. *Many shall come in my name, &c.*—The Jews have had pretenders to the Messiahship in different ages; but our Lord

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 [c] Then shall they deliver you up to

[c] Matt. x, 17; Luke xxi, 12; John xvi, 2.

speaks here only of those who should appear during that restless period which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Among these were Theudas, who promised to divide Jordan, and to lead his followers over dry-shod. Of this impostor, Josephus remarks, πολλους ηπατησεν, "he deceived many." Also, "the Egyptian," mentioned in Acts xxi, 38, who persuaded thirty thousand men to follow him to the mount of Olives, promising to lead them into Jerusalem to subvert the Roman power. This man was vanquished by Festus. One Dositheus asserted that he was the Christ foretold by Moses. Josephus says that the time of the advent of their King Messias being come, many were emboldened to set up for kings, or messiahs; and as to "false prophets," the same historian observes that there were "many prophets who, to the last, taught the Jews to expect help from God," and thus encouraged a hopeless resistance to the Romans.

Verse 6. *Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars.*—The insurrections, commotions and seditions against the Roman power, and those attended often with prodidious slaughters, were very numerous in different parts of the country before the siege of Jerusalem. "To speak particularly of them," as Whitby justly remarks, "would be to transcribe a great part of the history of the time by Josephus."

See that ye be not troubled.—They were not to be troubled for their own safety; for the time of their flight, which he afterward mentions, would not have arrived. They were to wait in calm and confident expectation of deliverance till the appointed signal, still publishing the Gospel, and endeavouring to do good to their country, being assured that all these movements, however apparently tumultuous, were controlled and directed by a higher Power, who would in the best and fittest time provide for their safety. This word of Christ may now calm the agitated minds of his people in all times of public danger. *See that ye be not troubled*, is still his command; and we have the same reason to confide all our interests to his management, and to be assured that "it shall be well with the righteous." "To be untroubled in troublous time" is the lofty and exclusive privilege of the true Christian.

All these things must come to pass, &c.—It is a part of that great process of judgment which I am about to execute.—*But the end is not yet*, the final blow will not be yet struck, the utter destruction of this guilty city will not for some time take place, notwithstanding these alarming commotions.

Verse 7. *For nation shall rise up against nation, &c.*—These seem chiefly to relate to the intestine strifes among the nations of Palestine, or the wars which took place between the tetrarchies, the partial conflicts between the Jews and Romans; including also the commotions by which the Roman empire was itself agitated. The later Jewish writers have here again imitated the words of our Lord, and applied them to the times of their vainly hoped-for future Messiah. "In the times of Messiah wars shall be stirred up in the world, nation shall rise against nation, and city against city."—*Sohar Kadash.* R. Eliezer, the son of Abina, said, "When ye see kingdom rising against kingdom, then expect the immediate appearance of the Messiah." R. Levi said, "In the times of the Messiah a pestilence will visit the world." Other similar passages occur, quite in our Lord's phraseology.

Famines.—One was foretold by Agabus, Acts xi, 28, and which occurred during the reign of Claudius Cesar; a second also occurred in the time of the same emperor; beside others less general, and which affected particular places.

Pestilences.—These always follow famines.

Earthquakes in divers places.—Grotius has produced accounts of many earthquakes which occurred during this period in Asia, and the islands of the Ægean Sea; and Josephus mentions their occurrence in Judea. In almost all these places, where these fearful commotions of the earth occurred, Jews were found in great numbers; so likewise were there many Christians, who would be warned by them of the near approach of the fulfilment of the words of Christ, as recorded in this gospel of St. Matthew. St. Luke adds, "And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven;" of several of which portents Josephus has left a record, as a flaming sword in the air, a blazing star, a great light between the temple and altar, &c.

be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Verse 9. *Then shall they deliver you up, &c.*—Although the followers of Christ were to be signally delivered from the calamities of the siege of Jerusalem, as it is afterward promised, yet during all these preparatory scenes of tumult and distress, they were to be exposed to persecution for Christ's sake; the hatred of the Jews increasing against them just as their religion made progress in the world, and as they hastened to fill up their own desperate wickedness. These persecutions, as far as they were the work of the Jews, are specially mentioned by St. Luke xxi, 12. But our Lord, in the words, *Ye shall be hated of all nations*, comprehends also the persecutions of his followers among the Gentiles, (in which, however, the Jews were often the chief actors and instigators,) during the period which should elapse from the first promulgation of the Gospel beyond the bounds of Judea to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and indeed subsequently. From the commencement, these predictions of our Lord were fulfilled in his suffering Church and continued for ages.—Of this the Acts of the Apostles bears testimony, and then the painful record is pursued in ecclesiastical history. Thus our Lord promised no worldly inducement, and faithfully warned his hearers what it would cost them to be his disciples. Yet who could predict that not only the Jews, because of their prejudices, might reject his doctrine, and persecute his followers, but that other nations, too, who had no such prejudices, should oppose his holy and benevolent religion, and hate his followers, *for his name's sake*,—so that to bear the very name of Christ was sufficient to expose them to shame and death,—but he who "knew what was in man," and whose prescient eye surveyed the future with the exactest knowledge. Humanly speaking, the teachers of the Christian system had as fair a chance to be heard in the world and to collect disciples among the civilized states around them, in an age of great and very free religious inquiry, as the followers of the various philosophic schools, and the founders of innumerable sects. Even Judaism had been widely propagated, and numbers of proselytes made from the Gentiles in various parts, without being followed by persecution on that account; and neither the Jews, who openly despised idolatry, nor the Epicurean sects, who denied a God and a providence, were molested. But our Lord knew the hearts of men everywhere, and how they would be affected by a religion simple in its worship, humbling in its doctrines, terrible to sinners in its disclosures of a general judgment and future punishments, rigid in its moral discipline, and holding out to hope few beside spiritual blessings: he knew how the carnal mind, which is naturally enmity to God, would manifest itself when a religion of this character, and pressing upon it with the weight of this authority, should be everywhere introduced; and the event proved the infallibility of his knowledge, and the truth of his predictions.

Verse 10. *Many shall be offended, &c.*—The difficulties and sufferings of the Christian life in these seasons of persecution would be as *stumbling blocks* to many, who would hasten out of so rough and dangerous a path; and such persons would be the first to *betray* others and deliver them up to their persecutors, and so discover the *hate* which apostates usually feel to the faithful. For, nobly as the early Christians, as a body, braved the storms which were excited against them—and truly it was then seen with what sublimity religion invests the human character,—there were among them false brethren, who either entirely shunned the cross, or fainted when it began to press heavily. Thus our Lord warns his apostles, not only of outward, but of internal treachery.

Verse 11. *And many false prophets shall arise, &c.*—Here also he warns them of what they, as the founders and chief pastors of Churches, would feel to be a bitterer trouble than either persecution or the treachery of those cowards who should desert their ranks;—the false doctrines and "damnable heresies" which should spring up in the Churches themselves. For, by *prophets* here we must understand *teachers;* and that these appeared in the Churches during the life of the apostles, and almost immediately after the reception of Christianity in various places, we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles of St. Paul, Peter, Jude, and John. All these denounce the false teachers who had mingled Judaism, and pagan philosophy, and the dreams of an oriental imagination, with the pure evangelism which had been first taught them, and had seduced many disciples to follow their errors, and to practise their vices.

Verse 12. *And because iniquity shall abound, &c.*—To interpret *iniquity*, ανομια, of those outrages and mock trials in which

14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 [d] When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by [e] Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop

[d] Mark xiii, 14.

[e] Daniel ix, 27.

all justice was denied to Christians, so that through these discouragements and sufferings the love of many should grow cold, is but to make our Lord repeat the same sentiment as that contained in verse 10. The words appear rather to point out a new danger to which the Church would be exposed: not only would it be persecuted by enemies, betrayed by apostates, distracted by heresies, but, through the abounding corruption of manners for which that age was remarkable, many Christians would fall into gross and licentious habits, and so dishonour their profession. Love to Christ is the only preservative from sin; and especially when all example strongly enforces it, and the public standard of morals is low. When man is not upheld by outward circumstances, he can only be sustained by some inward principle; and that which renders sin most abhorrent to the will, is "the love of God shed abroad" in the heart. But if by little and little, by unwatchfulness, and compliances with the example of others in smaller things, the vigour of that affection is suffered to decay, then the more powerful temptations prevail, and the Divine principle of love becomes extinct. For by growing cold we are not to understand the lukewarm state, but an entirely lapsed condition; the fire is not merely cooled, but gone out. For that, in this strongest sense, we must take the word *ψυχω*, appears from our Lord promising salvation in the next verse, only to those that should endure to the end; which sufficiently indicates that those whose love had grown cold had fallen into a state by which salvation was forfeited.

Verse 13. *But he that shall endure to the end, &c.*—Not to *the end* of these persecutions and troubles; for men may outlive their sufferings for Christ's sake, and the grace too which carried them through the trial, and fall away in times of subsequent ease and prosperity. Much less are we to understand, with others, by being *saved*, being delivered from the calamities of the siege of Jerusalem: for these words like the preceding verses, refer to Christians throughout the world, and not merely to those in Jerusalem, or even Judea. The salvation, as the connection shows, is eternal salvation; and it is promised to them that endure. Here the word *υπομενω* may be taken in the sense of *remaining* when others apostatize and depart; or in the sense of *patiently sustaining* all the afflictions, and conflicts, and temptations spoken of, to *the end of life;* for then only is our salvation secure and certain.

Verse 14. *And this Gospel of the kingdom, &c.*—This good news of the spiritual kingdom of Christ being established by his death and intercession, so that all men might become its subjects and receive its great immunities, *shall be preached in all the world, εν ολη τη οικουμενη.* This phrase sometimes signifies the Roman empire, which then embraced the greater portion of the civilized world. It is so used in Luke ii, 1; and this is the sense here, although in some cases the Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem was carried beyond this limit. We have, however, in these words, one of those portions of this series of prophecies which have a double reference; and the prediction in the text will be most literally accomplished before that end of time and of the mediatorial dispensation shall come, of which *the end*, as it is intended of God's forbearance with the Jews, was a type. That cannot arrive until all flesh has seen the salvation of God, through the publication of Christianity.

For a witness unto all nations.—The term witness, *μαρτυριον*, appears to be used in a similar sense as in 1 Cor. ii, 1, where St. Paul calls the Gospel "the *testimony* of God." It is that which witnesses and attests the love of God to the human race, and authoritatively makes the offer of salvation as from God to all who hear it.

Verse 15. *When therefore ye see the abomination, &c.*—Our Lord now proceeds to point out the signal at which his followers should provide for their own safety by flight, lest, being enclosed by the Roman armies, they should share in the common calamity. *The abomination of desolation* is several times mentioned in Daniel, to whose words our Lord refers, as to be then fulfilled. The Roman eagles which were carried as the standards of their legions, and were sacrificed to as divinities, and therefore as idols were called an *abomination* by the Jews, are here referred to. The Roman army also carried with it other idols, so that collectively it was "an abomination;" and of the *desolation* which it inflicted the Jews had frequent and severe experience. The *holy place* must here be taken in a large sense; for when the Roman standards were planted in the temple, the city was taken, and the possibility of

not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days?

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

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flight cut off. But the city and its suburbs were considered as holy in consequence of the proximity of the temple; and it is remarkable that Jerusalem was invested by the Romans under Cestius Gallus, prefect of Syria, some time before the final siege was commenced, but that general withdrew his army, and thus afforded all who believed the words of Christ opportunity to escape. Early and uniform tradition states that the Christians universally fled, after the Roman standard had thus been seen in the holy place, and remembering these very words of our Lord, they retired beyond Jordan, and in other directions; so that, when Titus sat down before the city, there was not one Christian remaining in it. Thus they were saved by their faith.

Verse 17. *The housetop.*—The flat terrace which formed the roof, from which a person might descend by stairs, not into the street, but into the gateway, without going into the house. The exhortation presses haste, although it was not perhaps designed to be taken literally.

Verse 18. *Return back to take his clothes.*—It was necessary for those employed in labour to lay aside their long, flowing, upper robes; which in this case being deposited in the house, or at some distance in the field, they are cautioned against going back to secure. This again is to be understood emphatically.—Fly without delay for your lives.

Verse 19. *But wo to them that are with child, &c.*—Pregnant women, and those who had children at the breast, would not be in a condition to escape, or must endure great miseries in attempting it. Of the sufferings of helpless females and children during the invasion of Judea, and the siege of Jerusalem, and the horrible famine there, frightful accounts are found in Josephus.

Verse 20. *In the winter, &c.*—Not in *the winter*, because of the difficulty of travelling, the want of food in the fields, and the inclemency of the weather: nor on the *Sabbath day;* not because it was unlawful to travel more than five furlongs on that day, a rule which, as it affected the Jewish Sabbath, Christians would not regard; but because the gates of cities were kept scrupulously closed on the Sabbath day. Thus we read in Nehemiah xiii, 19, "And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath." Persons without burdens might indeed go in and out; but no beasts could pass, on which the fugitives might be taking their flight; nor could they take any burden of provision and necessaries for their journey, which circumstance would render the attempt in many cases hopeless. Those who believed Christ's words would be the only persons to attempt to escape; but the Jews, infatuated with a persuasion of their safety, would in consequence uphold this law of their Sabbath in all its strictness. For these reasons, not that he by these words establishes the Jewish Sabbath, our Lord directs his disciples to pray that God would so order the matter that the necessity of escaping should not fall upon them either in the winter or on the Sabbath. And were the march of Roman armies, and the decisions of Roman councils, to be interfered with in answer to the prayers of a few poor Christians? Let philosophy scoff; but let faith adore: so it was. The first Roman army which surrounded Jerusalem retired; and when Vespasian succeeded to the command, various delays, arising out of the intestine troubles of the empire, occurred before the siege was finally undertaken; and not only was the opportunity afforded for flight, but the urgent moment fell neither upon the Sabbath, nor in the depth of winter.

Verse 21. *Such as was not from the beginning of the world, &c.*—This is not a hyperbolical expression; for no one can read the narrative of the Jew Josephus, without acknowledging that this national calamity has no parallel. This narrative appears to have been written and preserved under a special providence, of which Josephus himself was unconscious, that future times, in the testimony of an eye witness, and he not a Christian, might have full and unsuspected proof of the exact accomplishment of the words of Christ. In this verse critics have not failed to remark the force of the triple negatives, *ουδ' ου μη γενηται*, which we render more feebly, *no, nor ever shall be.* On surveying the calamities brought upon the Jews, Josephus exclaims, "If the misfortunes of all, from the beginning of the world, were compared with theirs, they would appear much inferior; no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation from the beginning of the world was ever more fruitful in wickedness."

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 [f] Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it*

[f] Mark xiii, 21; Luke xvii, 23.

Verse 22. *But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*—The elect are the Christian Jews, who had fled to the mountains, where they must have perished but that the subjugation of Judea, and the termination of the war were hastened, partly by the valour of the Romans, and partly by the intestine divisions of the besieged, who might, if united, have held out longer. But both these were under the special direction of God. The numbers which perished in this terrible war are calculated, by Josephus, at upward of a million of people, during the siege of the capital alone; and the number sold into captivity, at more than one hundred thousand. After some time many of the more peaceable Jews were allowed again to settle in Judea; among whom we find the Christians who had been thus so signally preserved, by attending to the warning of their Lord.

Verse 23. *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, &c.*—The caution refers to the time preceding the siege, that which was occupied by it, and even to the period that followed; and the renewal of this warning against false Christs and false prophets, shows to how great a danger the Jewish disciples were exposed through their national prejudices: for all these pretenders addressed themselves to the passions, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, held out the delusive hopes of deliverance, under an assumed Divine commission; or afterward promised the restoration of the nation.

Verse 24. *Great signs and wonders.*—What these were we have now no means of judging; whether deceptions, or the result, to a certain extent, of a permitted supernatural agency. From the detected character of popish "signs and wonders," which bear so strong a resemblance to those of Jewish and pagan miracles, we may conclude it probable that they were impostures, and "lying wonders," but artfully contrived by the more skilful to mislead the ignorant mass, prepared for delusion by that gross superstition and belief in magic which prevailed among them. Simon Magus bewitched the people of Samaria with his "sorceries;" and Josephus calls the false prophets who appeared at this time among the Jews *μαγοι* and *γοητες, magicians* and *sorcerers*. As to amulets, charms, sorceries, and enchantments, the Jews of that age were notoriously credulous; and as incredulous as to the real miracles of our Lord and his apostles! The truth of these miracles obtains from this a stronger evidence, and the unbelief of the Jews a MORAL solution. By a credulous people they must have been admitted as demonstrative of the doctrines in confirmation of which they were wrought; but they hated the doctrine itself, and this passion overpowered every mental habit, and changed, as to those glorious evidences of pure and holy truth, the whole character of their minds.—Nor is this case without parallel. The CREDULITY OF INFIDELITY in our own age has often been remarked; and it is exemplified in the readiness with which both those who entirely reject the holy Scriptures, and the critics who would explain away their supernatural character, admit the most absurd theories in opposition to them, and the deceived confidence with which they teach them to others.

If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.—The elect are the Christians as distinguished from the Jews; and the words express the powerful efforts to deceive made by the seducers, and the great difficulty in succeeding with Christians. This would arise from the abundant evidence they had of the truth of Christ's mission; the witness in themselves, in their own moral experience, of the certainty and excellence of his religion; and from that elevation of the intellect, and that dominion over superstition, which Christianity truly received never fails to produce. Accordingly, we find that the body of Christians remained unmoved by the most plausible of these pretenders.—But those that should argue from the words, "if it were possible," or more simply, *if possible, ει δυνατον*, that the seduction of the elect, that is, of even true Christians, is impossible, forget how solemnly our Lord warns them to "take heed" and to "watch" and "pray;" all which supposes danger, and that of no common kind. Nor does the phrase *ει δυνατον* express more than great difficulty. Thus, Acts xx, 16, "He hasted, *if it were possible for him, ει δυνατον αυτω*, to be at Jerusalem the day of pentecost." It was difficult, but clearly not impossible; he might or he might not. So also, in Romans xii, 18, "If it be possible, *ει δυνατον*, live peaceably with all men;" where the matter is difficult indeed, but if impossible, the exhortation would have been superfluous. Nor, when the circumstances of the Jewish Christians are considered, will it appear that they were out of the reach of this seduction. Like

were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 [g] For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days [h] shall the sun be darkened,

[g] Luke xvii, 37.—[h] Mark xiii, 24; Luke xxi, 25; Isaiah xiii, 10; Joel ii, 31: Ezek. xxxii, 7.

others, they felt the sting of Roman oppression, and the flame of patriotic feeling cannot be supposed to have burned less ardently in their minds than in those of the unbelieving part of the nation; and that various Jewish prejudices, as to the superiority of their nation, and the perpetuity of their institutions, so far as they were national, clung very closely to the early converts, we have sufficient evidence from the New Testament. Now, if these feelings were not strictly regulated, and these prejudices kept in subordination to great Christian principles, the judgment would naturally be darkened by the feelings, and their attachment to Christianity be shaken from the moment they began to regard it as antipatriotic, and opposed to the national liberation from a foreign yoke, and its future hoped-for civil glory. Here their danger lay, and this would expose them to the delusions of artful men. That few were led aside, proves that it was difficult, indeed, to deceive the very elect; but that none fell into this snare, is improbable. This, at least, we know, that they were in danger, or they would not have been so solemnly warned; and if they escaped, it was, as we must all escape evil of every kind, by "taking heed." *Behold*, says Christ, *I have told you before*; so that if you fall you will be without excuse.

Verse 26. *He is in the desert.*—Several of the false Messiahs collected their deluded followers in the deserts or wilderness, probably not only for the sake of secrecy, but under some notion that the delivering Messiah would issue out of the desert for their redemption.

In the secret chambers.—Taking counsel with the heads of the people, and maturing his plans, so that all are to hold themselves in readiness to join him at the first signal.—*Believe it not.* We may also probably infer from these cautions, that some Christians even, still clinging to the idea that our Lord, as the true Messiah, would interpose by a manifestation of himself to save the state from utter ruin, might look for his visible appearance, although they rejected the false Messiahs; and might therefore listen to reports of his being in the desert, or in some secret place. A notion was certainly held by the Jews subsequently, that the Messiah lay hid in some obscure place, as in an island of the sea, or the walks of the garden of Eden, with other similar absurdities; and some notion of this kind might be held under the influence of strong Jewish feelings by some of the weaker Christians respecting their Saviour. This affords an obvious reason why our Lord in the next verse describes the manner of his real coming, which would be publicly and suddenly, though not visibly, except by the effect, and not to save but to execute judgment.

Verse 27. *For as the lightning, &c.*—In the noble and illustrative comparison here used, his disciples were taught that he would not appear in the desert or in secret places, but, 1. In *public* majesty as Judge, to be known "by the judgment which he should execute." 2. Suddenly, without whispering premonitory rumours, even as the lightning from heaven. 3. Through the length and breadth of the land by the sudden and general meeting of the Roman armies in march, *from the east even to the west*, all hastening from the Mediterranean coasts on the east, toward Jerusalem on the west; which interpretation is confirmed and illustrated by what follows: *For where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* The carcass is Jerusalem; and the eagles are the Roman standards bearing the figures of this swift, powerful, and ravenous bird of prey. As eagles rush upon the dead carcass to tear and devour, so did the ravenous legions of Rome hasten as to their appointed prey, to the devoted city, dead to truth and godliness, and where the great body of the Jews was collected from all quarters. Those who prefer referring the particle γαρ to verse 26, as containing the reason for disregarding the rumours of the Messiah's appearance, evidently mistake the connection, and break and injure the sense, by isolating verse 27. Our Lord's fine allusion seems to be taken from Job xxxix, 30: "Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is she."

Verse 29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, &c.*—From this verse to the thirty-first, another instance occurs of prophecy with a double reference, as the

and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, [i] and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 [k] And he shall send his angels with

[i] Revelation i, 7.

[k] 1 Cor. xv, 52; 1 Thess. iv, 16.

elevation of the style itself intimates; for this coming of our Lord to judge the Jewish nation is described in the strongest and sublimest language of the Old Testament. In the prophetic style, the sun, moon, and stars represent states and their princes and nobles; and the darkening or eclipsing of them, their destruction. Of this numerous instances occur in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Thus, when the last mentioned prophet predicts the subversion of Egypt, he addresses Pharaoh, "And when I *put thee out*, I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light, and all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee," Ezekiel xxxii, 7, 8. But the language of Christ rises above that of the prophets: not only are the sun and moon darkened, but *the stars fall from heaven*; and not the stars, the lesser lights merely, but *the powers of heaven*, a phrase which includes all the celestial luminaries, "the greater and the lesser lights." These shall be shaken from their very orbits; so that the destruction of all the orders and dignities of the Jewish state, represented by these luminaries, shall be irreparably and for ever cast down and destroyed. And so it has been, ever since that day which the Prophet Joel, speaking of the same event, calls "the great and terrible day of the Lord." Jewish kings, princes, and heads of tribes; judges, nobles, priests, and rulers, have passed away, and entire "darkness" covers the heaven of that state which once glowed so richly with the "bright lights of the various orders of dignified and holy men." Not fewer than twelve thousand of the Jewish nobility perished in the siege of Jerusalem.

Verse 30. *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man.*—As the former verse applies not only figuratively to the destruction of the Jewish state, but literally to the last day when the natural sun, moon, and stars of heaven shall be darkened, and heaven and earth shall pass away for ever; so this verse is to be understood in the same manner. *The sign of the Son of man* is that demonstration of the supernatural character of the judicial visitation of the Jews, that to the Christians it should be as sure a sign that it was Christ who was then inflicting his vengeance upon his enemies, as though there should be a visible personal appearance of him. Even Josephus, a Jew, acknowledged in these events the special displays of the more immediate agency of an angry God; and much more to Christians, taught by Christ to expect his coming in this manner, would they be *the sign* of his majesty to whom "all power in heaven and earth" had been committed, and thus prove a mighty confirmation of their faith. At the last day "the sign of the Son of man" will be his personal manifestation.

All the tribes of the earth shall mourn.—Αι φυλαι της γης, the tribes of *the land* or *the earth*, the word being used both in the restricted and the extended sense, and is to be taken here in either, as the words are considered as referring to the judgment of the Jews or to the judgment of the world.

The Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, &c.—This is the manner in which the Judge shall descend when time shall be no longer: in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, and the glory of the holy angels; and to this final and most glorious advent the words are, in the highest sense, to be referred. But they are also to be understood as immediately applicable to the event of which our Lord was speaking; for that our Lord is represented in Scripture as coming in this manner, in a figurative as well as literal sense, appears from Daniel vii, 13, where he is said to come "with the clouds of heaven" to the Ancient of days in order to receive his mediatorial kingdom. The same image is also frequent in the prophets, when they speak of the Almighty coming to execute his judgments upon nations. "The Lord rideth upon *a swift cloud*, and shall come into Egypt," Isaiah xix, 1. "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and *the clouds* are the dust of his feet," Nahum i, 3.

Verse 31. *And he shall send his angels, &c.*—Here the events of the last day seem to be exclusively referred to; and the more immediate application of the prophecy to be left behind; although, no doubt, as the destruction of the Jews is described by metaphors taken from the day of judgment, and is to be considered as an awful type of the perdition of sinful men in general, and especially of those who reject the Gospel; so the signal deliverance of the Christians from being shut up in Jerusalem, and perishing with its devoted inhabitants, was also a type of that separation which shall be made between the righteous and the wicked at the last day, and the deliverance from the terrors of the general judgment of all who believe in Christ. This shall be done by the ministry of the attendant angels; for they will come not only

a * great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all things be fulfilled.

35 [1] Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 ¶ But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

* Or, *with a trumpet and a great voice.*

[1] Mark xiii, 31.

to give pomp to the scene, but to be actors in it: the separation of the good from the bad is expressly ascribed to the ministry of angels in the parable of the tares. Several of the commentators take *the angels* here to be the apostles; and the gathering together of *the elect* to be the collecting of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, from the most distant nations. This, however, introduces a perfectly distinct and apparently an inapposite subject, and it unnecessarily violates the connection. The *sound of a trumpet* is introduced here with great effect, because the great assemblies of the Israelites were convoked by trumpets.* Now the vast assembly of the good of all ages, the general assembly and Church of the first-born, is to be summoned even from the very grave itself; and they shall all be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with the Lord."

Verse 32. *Parable of the fig tree, &c.*—Here the word parable is used in the sense of a simple comparison. The *fig tree* was well known in Judea; and as the putting forth of its leaves was a certain sign of *summer*, so the occurrence of the signs he had mentioned was to be the infallible indication that the full and final destruction of Jerusalem was close at hand, even at the doors. Our Lord adds this as the conclusion of this part of his discourse, because he had now given an answer to the question of his disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" verse 3.

Verse 34. *This generation shall not pass away till all these things, &c.*—By *all these things*, we are to understand all the calamities with which Christ had threatened the Jews; not his coming finally to judge the world, which was but a subject ingrafted upon the other, and not that which was in answer to the question of the disciples, just referred to. That he leaves this phrase to be interpreted by the scope and circumstances of the discourse, is evident from the preceding verse, where the same phrase, *all these things*, παντα ταυτα, must necessarily be restricted to preliminary and premonitory events, and not to the whole of those of which he had been speaking. There is no just place therefore for those laborious efforts at interpretation which the declaration of Christ, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," have called forth. The generations of men are clearly not intended, nor the race of the Jews, but the generation of men then living; all of whom should not die before the accomplishment of these prophecies as they respected the Jewish state, which occurred about forty years afterward. Many young persons would survive it; and of the apostles then present, at least John. No doubt also some few of the Pharisees themselves, who had been reproved by Christ, might see these events, although the names of those whom Lightfoot mentions rest upon no satisfactory evidence.

Verse 35. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, &c.*—See note on chap. v, 18.

Verse 36. *Not the angels of heaven, but the Father.*—St. Mark adds, "Neither the Son;" and some early translators appear to have read this clause also in their copies of this Gospel. Those critics who would reject it as an interpolation certainly do not produce sufficient reason for its omission; and although at first sight it appears to create a difficulty, that will disappear upon a careful consideration. That *the day* spoken of must be understood of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as of the day of judgment,—in other words, that the prophecy still runs on in twofold reference to both these events,—appears from our Lord exhorting his disciples, verse 42, to "watch," because of the uncertainty in which they would be kept as to the arrival of *the day and the hour* of which he speaks. That *men* and *angels* too should be ignorant of the exact time both of the visitation of Jerusalem, and of the general judgment, must follow, if they had no revelation of it; for no creature is, in the proper sense, prescient. But that *the Son*, who had predicted even minute circumstances respecting the siege of the Judean metropolis, and the calamities to be brought upon the nation, should be unacquainted with the *time* of these occurrences, even if the distinction which had been made between Christ's prophetic endowments by the Holy Spirit and his knowledge as God were admitted, is highly improbable. That as a man "he grew in wisdom" as well as stature, we know from inspired testimony; still, this took

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 [m] For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 [n] Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

[m] Gen. vii, 7; Luke xvii, 26.

[n] Luke xvii, 36.

place previous to the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon him at his baptism, which communication of the Spirit was to him "without measure;" and accordingly, we find that his predictions bear the character, and are in proof, of a perfect prescience. Of his knowledge of the exact time, *the day and the hour*, both of the final visitation of Judea, and also of that appointed day in which God will judge the world, there can therefore be no reasonable doubt; and hence we must seek for the explication of the text in that idiomatic use of the word TO KNOW, which the Hebrew so often furnishes, and which the evangelist would naturally follow, although he wrote in Greek. *To know*, in this place, appears to bear the sense of the Hebrew conjugation hiphil, and to signify, therefore, *to make to know*, that is, *to declare* or *reveal*. This is the solution adopted by several critics, and is not without example in the New Testament. The word is so used by St. Paul: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ," &c., 1 Cor. ii, 2, where undoubtedly the apostle by TO KNOW, means TO MAKE KNOWN; for he is speaking, not of the kind of knowledge he determined to acquire, but of that which he resolved alone to communicate. The meaning will then be, that by none of the three means of communication by which God has been pleased to reveal his purposes, neither inspired *men* nor *angels*, nor even *the Son* himself, was the exact time of that visitation MADE KNOWN or *revealed*. Christ had generally declared that the generation among whom he lived should not "pass away until all these things were fulfilled;" but a more particular revelation was withheld, and the time kept hidden with THE FATHER until he should make it known by the fact of its sudden occurrence. The Father is the great Fountain of authority, even to the Son; a point which our Lord often adverts to, and specially so when the Son is regarded officially as Mediator. In his prophetic office he makes known those counsels of the Father which he alone perfectly knows; but the wisdom of God has placed a limit upon the nature and extent of the revelations to be made to man. In this the moral benefit of creatures, and the circumstances of their probation are always kept in view; but of these, God alone can judge. The reserve expressed in the text is parallel to that in our Lord's words after his resurrection; when the disciples inquired, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" and he answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." And similar to this is the declaration of St. Paul: "Which in HIS OWN TIMES he shall show, who is the true and only Potentate, King of kings," &c.

Verse 37. *As it was in the days of Noe, &c.*—These words doubtless refer to the calamities which were to befall the Jews, and they predict the careless and carnal security in which the day of their visitation would surprise them. How far this and the following verses describe the state of men in general previous to the day of judgment, is at least doubtful. The reference is to the twofold coming of Christ, which indeed runs through the prophecies, sometimes more emphatically relate to one than to the other; and, as remarked above, abrupt transitions from one to the other occur. Here the moral state of the Jews, as a nation, appears to be exclusively referred to, and a striking, but just parallel is exhibited between them and the antediluvians. Both were long warned by divinely commissioned men; both disbelieved God's testimony; both abandoned themselves wholly to their worldly interests and pursuits, to their sensualities and other vices; and, in both cases, the long delayed, threatened judgment came upon them unawares, and the destruction became a standing monument to future ages of the righteous severity of God. The next verse indicates the criminal cause of the whole catastrophe in both cases,—*and they knew not*, ουκ εγνωσαν, *they considered not*, they laid not to heart the frequent warnings they had received, and the gracious offers which the mercy of God made to them, during that space for repentance which the long suffering of God afforded them.

Verses 41, 42. *Two men shall be in the field.*—These instances of separation relate to the singular deliverances which those who believed in Christ experienced in these calamities. This would appear the more remarkable when they occurred, as here mentioned, in the same family, men of the

42 ¶ ° Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

° Mark xiii, 35.

same household working in the field; and women of the same family employed in the domestic service of grinding corn. In respect to faith in Christ, houses were often divided, and Christians mingled with unbelievers; but, by these instances of deliverance, it was showed that "the Lord knoweth them that are his." The word *women* is not in the Greek, but is properly supplied: the work of grinding was generally performed by the females of each house,—Hence, "to grind," as well as to bake, &c., was, among the Jews, reckoned among the duties of a wife. The mill, μυλον, was a hand mill, into the upper stone of which two handles were fixed, and turned by two persons. Sometimes but one handle was used, which was thrown by one of the grinders to the other, and so back again.

Verse 42. *Watch ye therefore; for ye know not, &c.*—It is the opinion of many of the commentators, that the preceding verse terminates our Lord's discourse as to the destruction of the Jews, and that this verse introduces a distinct discourse which relates wholly to the last day. But what precedes cannot be throughout satisfactorily interpreted of one event only; and, as to what follows, the best view is, that it applies throughout more emphatically to the second personal advent of Christ, than to his more immediate invisible manifestation in judgment; and that the discourse continues to rise, until in the next chapter it terminates exclusively in the solemnities of the last day. This exhortation to watchfulness in particular, instead of commencing a new discourse, is obviously the great lesson which our Lord intended to enforce, by informing his disciples that their inquiry, "WHEN shall these things be?" could not be more particularly answered; "the day and the hour" was hidden from them, that they might live always in the spirit of vigilance, and the exercise of holy duties.

Verse 43. *If the good man of the house, &c.*—The similitude is here familiar and striking. The coming of a thief upon a house, when the family are all asleep, fitly denoted the sudden and unexpected character of those calamities which were about to fall upon a nation lulled into the deep sleep of spiritual delusion, and even political infatuation; while the true disciple, being forewarned, and continuing to watch, would, like the master of a house prepared to frustrate the attacks of a night robber, escape the danger. The exact meaning of our Lord's words appears, however, generally to have escaped interpreters. The night, with the Jews, was

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43 ᵖ But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what

ᵖ Luke xii, 39; 1 Thess. v, 2; Rev. xvi, 15.

divided into four watches; from six to nine, from nine to twelve, from twelve to three, and from three to six. "Now," says our Lord, "*if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched.*" How, it may be asked, is it that the knowledge of the time of the attack is represented as a motive to watchfulness in this case; when our Lord's great reason for watchfulness is drawn from the time of his coming being unknown, because purposely kept a secret? This apparent difficulty will be removed if we remark that our Lord does not say that the master of the house obtains information as to the hour in which the thief would come, but the WATCH, which was of three hours' duration. This premonition represents the degree of information given by Christ, that "this generation" should not pass away before his predictions, as to the Jews, should be fulfilled. This was information as to the TIME, but it was not exact and particular; and therefore, as the night takes place within the period of the existing generation, sooner or later, it behooved them to be in readiness for it. Just as if the master of a family had received information that a thief would come in some particular watch, but the exact time not being mentioned, he would keep awake and upon his guard during the whole watch of three hours. Hence the exhortation in the next verse, *Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.* The readiness of a Christian for all national calamities, for all visitations of sudden affliction of any kind, for the hour of death, and for the day of judgment, may be summed up in the one great and all-important habit of watchfulness. For as this supposes suitable apprehensions of our spiritual dangers; steady attention to the warnings of our Lord; the habits of prayer and trust; the preference of spiritual and heavenly things to things present and earthly; and a state of moral preparation for every event, so that every interest of ours, in time and in eternity, is placed under the security of the love and faithfulness of our Saviour; it necessarily includes every thing that can make us READY for "the coming of the Son of man," in whatever sense that phrase is understood.—That the apostles understood our Lord as referring, under the figure of the coming of a thief in the night, not only to the destruction of the metropolis of their country, but also to the sudden burst of the terror of the last day upon a careless world, may be inferred from the application of his words to the latter event. Thus, 2 Peter iii, 10;

watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 ¶ Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

¶ St. Luke, chap. xii, 42.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Suffered his house to be broken up.—Literally the word signifies *to be dug through;* because the eastern houses are generally formed of dry clay, or bricks hardened in the sun but not burned: and it was the manner of house robbers to enter them by perforating the walls. "In the dark," says Job, "they dig through houses, which they have marked in the day time." The law of Moses, Exod. xxii, 2, gave power to those within the house to kill such thieves with impunity: "If a thief be found breaking or digging through, and be smitten till he die, there shall no blood be shed for him;" that is, the case shall be deemed one of justifiable homicide.

Verse 45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant? &c.*—This parable refers to ministers; and was at once designed by Christ to instruct his disciples who were about to be raised to that office, and to reprove the scribes and doctors of the law who pretended to it. Such public teachers of his religion are compared to stewards, persons set over a household, or large family of servants, and whose business it was to direct their labours, and to give to them their portion of provisions monthly; here called, *in due season. Who then,* says our Lord, is that servant? Τις αρα εστι; Chrysostom thinks that the τις expresses how rare and valuable such servants are: but it is probably used in the sense of WHOEVER, and answers to the corresponding words, "Blessed is that servant," &c. Whoever he may be, he is truly and eminently happy, he is the object of God's special favour, *whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* The office and duties of a true minister are by this parable forcibly pointed out. It is of Divine appointment, not of human assumption; it conveys the power to rule in the family, but as a servant, responsible to the great common Master: the object of this rule is to promote the service of the Lord in all the duties which may be assigned to each; and in order to this, the food, the wholesome doctrine of Christ by which alone strength for holy labours is imparted, must be administered *fully,* as out of the abundance which the Master has provided; STATEDLY, according to the rules of the house; and in DUE SEASON, that there may be nothing deficient in the administration either as to kind, or the circumstances of the servants.

Verse 47. *Ruler over all his goods, &c.*—He shall be promoted to a higher honour, who is faithful in the inferior ministrations at first assigned him. His gifts shall be multiplied, his usefulness and influence enlarged, and his reward in eternity shall be heightened.

Verse 48. *My Lord delayeth his coming, &c.*—And from this delay doubts whether he will come at all, nourishing a secret infidelity as to the fact of his being a severe judge of unfaithful servants, or at least grows presumptuous upon the long suffering and patience exercised; and *shall begin to smite his fellow servants,* acting the part of a tyrant instead of a mild and faithful director; *and to eat and drink with the drunken,* giving himself up, not only to pride and violent tempers, but to sensuality and indulgence, ease and luxury: *the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looked not for him, &c.,* and the surprise shall be followed by the highest degree of punishment; *for to be cut asunder,* or sawn asunder, or cut in pieces, was one of the terrible modes of capital punishment among the Jews, as we learn from Heb. xi, 37, "they were sawn asunder;" which death, Jewish tradition says, Isaiah suffered from Manasseh. The Targum also on Esther ix, 14, reads, "Whosoever does not wish prosperity to Mordecai shall be cut in pieces, and his house shall be made a dunghill." So Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces, before the Lord." This punishment is transferred from corporal torment to the terrible inflictions of God's wrath upon unfaithful servants in another world. Some, however, take διχοτομεω, in the sense of severe scourging, in which sense the Greek τεμνειν, and the Latin *discindere,* are sometimes used. Others use the word in the sense of *discarding* or *depriving of office,* or *cutting off from the family.* Beza renders,

50 The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall *cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

* Or, *cut him off.*

separabit eum. Still the weight of the punishment belongs to the eternal state, as is sufficiently denoted by what follows: *and appoint him his portion with hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* St. Luke adds to hypocrites, "unbelievers;" both terms were probably used by our Lord, and with great force, inasmuch as such unfaithful ministers have usually presumed much upon the sanctity of their profession as affording them the hope of the Divine favour; whereas our Lord intimates that that very profession unworthily supported would only be charged upon them as a mask of hypocrisy, and their pretended zeal for faith would not prevent them from being ranked with unbelievers, only with an aggravated punishment. In this highly admonitory parable, Christ looks beyond his immediate disciples, whom he was about fully to constitute apostles and evangelists, and to send forth "into all the world," to gather Churches and to rule and feed them in his name, as his "stewards," to the Christian ministry as he knew it would exist and be abused in future ages. The character of pride, tyranny, sensuality, luxury, and infidelity, which are here so forcibly drawn in few words, have been written broadly and legibly upon the priesthood of all fallen Churches; and the threatened punishment is so tremendous that it will make even the faithful minister tremble lest he should fall by unwatchfulness into the same condemnation.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 *The parable of the ten virgins,* 14 *and of the talents.* 31 *Also the description of the last judgment.*

1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

CHAPTER XXV. Verse 1. *Be likened unto ten virgins, &c.*—In an inferior sense it has been supposed this parable may be applied to the state in which the Christian Church would be found at the coming of Christ to judge the Jewish nation, although its ultimate reference is admitted to be to the day of judgment. We do not, however, know that the state of the Hebrew Churches, or that of Jerusalem in particular, answered to the description of the parable. It is more satisfactory to consider it as relating solely to the day of final account, but SUGGESTED by the sudden coming of Christ to judge the Jews, which was a type of his sudden second advent to judge the Church and the world. That it is the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, and not the Jewish nation, of which the parable speaks, is indicated by the introductory formula. *Then shall* THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN *be likened unto ten virgins;* for the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," always refers either to the Gospel dispensation, or that which is connected with it, as a part of its administration. As the parable is founded upon the customs observed at Jewish marriages, to state these will usefully serve to explain the literal sense of the parable.—After the marriage ceremony was performed and attested, it was customary for the bridegroom, in the evening, to conduct his spouse from her friends to his own home, in a procession rendered as brilliant and imposing as the circumstances of the bridegroom would allow. His young female friends and relations were invited, and with lamps waited in a company near the house, till the bridegroom returned with the bride and her attendant friends: when, after the customary congratulations, those who were in waiting joined the train, and with acclamations, and other expressions of joy, proceeded to the bridegroom's house, to the nuptial entertainment, which among persons of rank was of the most splendid and costly kind. The doors were then closed to prevent the intrusion of strangers. The following extract from Ward's "View of the Hindoos" shows how unchanged many of the customs of the east remain, and strikingly illustrates this parable:—"At a marriage, the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh'

2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

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go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared: but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride; at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed on a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by sepoys. I and others expostulated with the door-keepers, but in vain."

The mystical meaning of the parable may be opened by the following remarks:—

1. The *virgins* represent not merely professed members of the Church, but persons who had all been under the influence of grace; and this view rendered the parable specially admonitory to the disciples, the professed friends of our Lord, to whom it was doubtless addressed. There was a time when the lamps of the whole ten virgins had been replenished with oil and were all burning; a time too when even the foolish virgins were at their post of duty, waiting for the bridegroom. The oil in the lamp, being of the same quality of that in the vessel, the fault of the five foolish virgins was that of not taking enough. There was deficiency of quantity; the delay of the bridegroom discovered the deficiency. The parable is specially designed to warn against resting in a superficial and partial piety. The mere number *ten* does not appear to involve any particular mystery; this number being a favourite indefinite term among the Jews.

2. Though all the persons represented by the ten virgins are to be considered as under the influence of grace, yet the work in the hearts of some of them was more deep and effectual than in the others. The terms *wise* and *foolish*, φρονιμοι and μωραι are to be understood in the sense of *prudent foresight*, and *the contrary*; and the first implies that steady regard to all future dangers and trials of grace which leads to a careful preparation for them. This is beautifully represented under the figure of the prudent virgins taking oil *in their vessels with their lamps*; for, although it is true that we can lay up no store of grace so as to render us less dependent upon the aid of God in future time than at the present hour, yet the vigorous use of our present spiritual strength, that is, of that moral power we derive from the influence of the Holy Spirit, so leads to those richer communications from God, and so strengthens the habit of holy decision in the will, and serves so to confirm the right and vigorous tendency of the affections, that he who is faithful to PRESENT grace does by that constantly contribute to his FUTURE safety.—The foolish virgins, therefore, represent those who do not prudently look forward to the dangers and conflicts of future life, and so give up themselves fully to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ," but sink into carelessness and lukewarmness of spirit. In this case the oil of the lamp burns out, and there is no supply in the vessel, because their hearts are withdrawn from the influence of God. Thus the principle of spiritual life perishes, and death cuts off the possibility of restoration for ever.

3. The eternal union of Christ with his faithful Church is represented under the figure of marriage. In the same metaphorical language the covenant relation of Jehovah and the Jewish people is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament; and some of the most striking passages of the prophets, expressive both of tenderness and reproof, are founded upon it. There are also predictions in the Old Testament of the union of the evangelical Church with Christ, that spiritual Church, composed of believers of all nations, which was to succeed that founded on natural descent from Abraham. Of this the forty-fifth psalm is a beautiful example. Here, in the parable before us, the subject is the union of Christ with his Church, glorified in heaven. She is to be brought to the house of the bridegroom "adorned as a bride for her husband," arrayed in all the beauty and glory of grace and purity, to be united for ever with him, and to receive all the expressions of his love, and to render them back with entire and unabated affection.

4. The *tarrying* of the bridegroom represents the delay of Christ's second advent.—That day was made known to no man. The first disciples appear therefore to have felt that it might come at any moment, at least after the destruction of Jerusalem, or be combined with that event. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, mentions the falling away which should come first, in order to correct an error into which they had fallen in supposing that that day was "at hand;"

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are * gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so;* lest there be not enough for us and

* Or, *going out.*

and St. Peter, when rebuking the scoffers of his age, while he seems to justify the use of expressions common probably in the discourses of the first preachers when they exhorted to preparation for that event, by referring the delay to God's "long suffering;" and yet hints its delay by remarking that the lapse of ages could make no difference in the purposes of God, seeing that with him "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The whole mode of speaking on this subject was adapted to PRACTICAL purposes, and wisely connected the day of our death with the day of final judgment; because the apostles all taught that after death there could be no redemption for the wicked, and the righteous could not lapse from their state of security. Ages have indeed passed, and the Bridegroom still tarries; but every serious mind will live under the influence of the most solemn thoughts of that day; because of the uncertainty of life, and the equal certainty that in the same moral state in which death transmits him into the eternal world, the day of final account must find him.

5. It is added, *they all slumbered and slept.* Those interpreters who consider these words as intimating that all, even the most vigilant, are subject to religious decays, and are apt to fall into a slumbering and lukewarm state, do not appear to consider that their interpretation involves the absurdity of supposing that those persons whose hearts are abundantly furnished with holy affection, which is undoubtedly indicated by the wise virgins having made provision of oil in their *vessels*, can sink into this supposed state of religious indifference, and that equally with others; for whatever this slumbering and sleeping may signify, it is expressly said to have happened to the wise and foolish virgins alike: *they* ALL *slumbered and slept.* This view also allows the SAFETY of an unwatchful and lukewarm state of mind, contrary to the constant doctrine of Christ. Add to this, that no fault is ascribed either to the wise or foolish virgins for slumbering and sleeping while the bridegroom tarried; but the praise of the former was, that they had prudently taken oil in their vessels with their lamps, and the fatal fault of the latter that they had neglected this necessary provision. Such an interpretation cannot, therefore, be maintained, and the scope and design of the parable requires us to understand slumbering and sleeping to represent DEATH. While the Bridegroom tarries, the successive generations of Christians, whether prepared or not for their Lord's coming, sleep in death; and it is the last day only that shall fully declare which of them have taken oil in their vessels; that is, whose hearts are in a state of preparedness to hail his second advent with joy, and to enter into his everlasting kingdom.

6. The sudden appearance of Christ at the last day, and the pomp of it, is figured by the coming of the bridegroom. The gates are suddenly thrown open; the light of the torches of the attendants flashes at once upon the darkness of midnight: those who precede cry, "The bridegroom cometh!" then follows the splendour of the procession itself, which, among the opulent, was elaborate and imposing: these were all images familiar to the Jews, and wonderfully adapted to impress the imagination and to fix the moral of the whole. There is no reason to conclude from this that Christ will come to judgment literally at *midnight;* but this time is here mentioned to intimate the delay of Christ's coming; for it was long before midnight that the ceremony described in the parable usually took place. Several circumstances are introduced into the parable which must be interpreted in their general import, and not strictly, as if every particular had a mystical meaning, and nothing was to be left to complete the narrative and to give it grace and action. This discrimination is essential to the sober interpretation of all parables, and particularly to this. We shall not, however, stray beyond this limit, if we consider the *arising* of the virgins as representing the resurrection from the dead, and the trimming of the lamps, by pouring in oil, and thus as the word εκοσμησαν signifies, *putting them in order* for the purpose of meeting the bridegroom, as the resumption of that profession of devotedness to Christ, and attention to the duty of "waiting for his appearing," which they had assumed during this life. Both the wise and the foolish virgins arose for this purpose; but it is to be remarked, that the wise only were able thus to rekindle their lamps, as they only had provided oil for this purpose, of which the others were destitute; and thus we are taught that those only whom the sanctifying grace of God has put into a state of due preparation for eternity will be able to resume even their profession. This lamp, the outward visible sign of connection with Christ, is in all others for ever quenched

you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 [a] Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

14 ¶ [b] For *the kingdom of heaven is*

[a] Matt. xxiv, 42; Mark xiii, 33.

[b] Luke xix, 12.

by death, and can never again be lighted up. The oil, the small measure of grace, which once supplied its flame, is consumed; the vessel of the heart, which ought to have been replenished with it, is empty; and the opportunity for obtaining a supply is past. This last most important point of instruction is illustrated by what follows; which must be understood as intended simply to inculcate this general truth. For we are not to suppose that there is any thing in the case of persons found unprepared for the second coming of our Lord, to answer minutely to the application of the foolish virgins to the wise to give them of their oil, as though they should apply to them for grace; or in the answer, "Go unto them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The general and solemn admonition and moral of this part of the parable is, that the case of all who, at the second coming of Christ, are found destitute of holy preparation for that event, will be as utterly hopeless as that of the five virgins who, when the cry, "The bridegroom cometh!" was already heard, should attempt to purchase oil, when the time would not admit of its being obtained before the bridegroom had entered his house, and the doors were shut. The period, midnight, when the dealers in oil were not likely to be found at their shops, and the small space of time which remained to resort to them had they been there, rendered success impossible; and it is this imposibility of repairing a previous neglect of salvation, when Christ shall come in his glory, which is the great lesson intended to be conveyed.

Verse 10. The instruction impressed by the result of the whole cannot be misunderstood. *They that were ready went in with him unto the marriage.*—Heaven is prepared only for those who are rendered "meet" for it by sanctifying grace; and the shutting of the door denotes the eternal exclusion of all others. Nor can a former profession of discipleship, nor even former experience of any degree of grace, if lost, like the consumed oil of the lamp, avail as a plea for admission, should even such pleas be made. When the five foolish virgins made their earnest application, the stern reply of a slighted Saviour was, *I know you not;* that is, I APPROVE or regard you not, and therefore disown you, though my professed friends. This sense of the verb rendered "to know," answers to the Hebrew יָדַע, rendered by the Septuagint γενοτσκειν, in Nahum i, 7, "The Lord knoweth them that trust in him;" he regards them with affection. To the whole our Lord adds the general moral, *Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh;* where by watchfulness is meant all that is implied by the prudence and foresight of the wise virgins; a steady regard to the certainty of Christ's coming, however long delayed, and full and suitable preparation for it. Where these do not meet, the habit of true Christian watchfulness is not acquired; and the result must be fatal. Those who have searched the rabbinical writings have produced one or two parables bearing some imperfect similarity to this fine parable of our Lord; but which, instead of being the source, as they pretend, from which his was drawn, bear, like most other examples of this kind, internal evidence of being poor imitations, in which, however, both the spirit and grace are entirely lost. "How greatly," we are gravely told by those who adopted this notion, "are the Jewish parables improved in coming through the hands of Christ!" We should rather say, How greatly are Christ's parables spoiled in passing through the hands of Jewish doctors!

Verse 14. *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling, &c.*—Our translators have supplied the ellipsis here by *the kingdom of heaven;* others prefer *the Son of man.* The former is, however, the usual form of introduction to such parables. As the necessity of deep personal and persevering piety had been inculcated by the former parable; this is designed to impress upon Christians the necessary duty of public usefulness, the neglect of which would be equally fatal to the soul. A parable somewhat similar is recorded by St. Luke, but it was spoken on another occasion, in the house of Zaccheus. This, like the former, was delivered on the mount of Olives, three days before the last passover. Both, however, are grounded upon a custom which still prevails in some parts of the east, for masters to intrust capital to their servants, even when slaves, to trade with, the proceeds of which are rendered to the master, but rewards are bestowed upon the most diligent and successful. Among the Jews, as Mai-

as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five * talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those

* A talent is 187*l.* 10*s.*,

Matt. xviii, 24.

monides informs us, when "a master went out of the land of Israel, he could not take his servants with him, unless they pleased." The most profitable manner of employing them during his absence would therefore often be in trading.

His goods.—Τα υπαρχοντα, used for property of any kind.

Verse 15. *Five talents, &c.*—The talent of silver is doubtless here meant; which at its lowest estimate was equal to 187*l.* 10*s.*; at its highest, 342*l.* 3*s.* 9*d.*

According to his several ability.—According to his capacity and opportunity to employ the money to advantage. The talents represent the various gifts, and opportunities for employing them for the benefit of mankind, which are furnished to each individual; for our Lord graciously accounts the good we do to others to be using our gifts and opportunities to his profit as the great Master and proprietor of all. Thus a fine view is opened of the benevolence of God: what is done to promote the happiness and salvation of any of his creatures, he regards as done to himself. Variously were the supernatural gifts by which many of the first Christians were distinguished, bestowed upon them,—"to one, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gift of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy," &c.; but this "manifestation of the Spirit was given to every man to profit withal," that is, to promote the conversion and edification of men. The ordinary gifts had then and still have the same variety. Knowledge, eloquence, and influence, or the capacity of attaining them, and favourable opportunities of employing them and improving them by use, are dispensed indifferently by an infinite and infallible wisdom. And it is here to be remarked that as every servant had at least *one talent*, so, as every Christian is a servant of Christ, and has his work assigned him, not only that of his own salvation, but the work of serving others, he has the means of usefulness assigned to him, and though in a lower degree than some, yet at the lowest in a large measure: for this is indicated by the one talent, which, though but one, was no inconsiderable sum. Every Christian, however humble, has by his example, his sound and savoury speech, "seasoned with grace, ministering grace to the hearers," and by taking his part in some service of usefulness, the power by God's blessing, to promote not merely some temporal interest of others, in which his ability may be very limited, but that which is connected with the soul and with eternity.

Verse 16. *Other five talents, &c.*—As wealth, rightly and industriously occupied, produces wealth, so it is with him who rightly, diligently, and prayerfully uses, for the spiritual benefit of others, those gracious gifts with which our Lord has put him in trust. The communication of religious knowledge produces religious knowledge, and that both in himself and others. The influence of piety exerted on others increases our own, and usually is successful as to many of those for whose spiritual good we are seriously and earnestly concerned; and he who is strenuously and affectionately desirous of saving others, both "saves himself and them that hear him." So glorious is this vocation of the true servants of Christ; and with the potentiality of producing such effects, so criminal is he that despises even the one talent, which when employed might lead to such results.

Verse 18. *And hid his lord's money.*—He neglected to trade with it, as being *slothful;* and he hid it in the earth, that it might be safe, and so be returned to his master, which he vainly hoped would screen him from punishment, though it might deprive him of reward; in which he was influenced, as the sequel shows, by a slavish fear, and false apprehensions of difficulty and danger, and was without the animating desire of approbation and reward, and the courage to seek them through a difficult path. This servant appears to represent a numerous class of professing Christians who are so far influenced by the apprehension of Christ's displeasure at last, as to avoid all direct ABUSE of the talents of various kinds intrusted to them, but are not roused into exertion and zeal either by right views of the danger to which neglect and indifference in the cause of Christ expose them, nor animated by the noble desire of approving themselves to their Lord, and of attaining the honours and larger rewards of the eternal world. They run not for this

servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents,

prize, because they possess not spirituality enough to value it. For their excuses see what follows.

Verse 19. *After a long time, &c.*—Even until the day of final account, the *reckoning* is delayed. But then it takes place; and here the following circumstances are to be noticed:—1. That "every one shall give account of himself to God." He reckoneth with them SEVERALLY, one by one; for though the last judgment may not be in its formality particular to any one, it will be so really both from the secret consciousness which each one has, that the Judge is dealing with him according to his merits, and from the exact apportionment of the reward or the penalty. In effect and reality it will be the same as though every individual had a personal and particular trial, and an express decision on his formally stated case. 2. That the account required is exact and strict. This is indicated by the phrase, *και συναιρει μετ' αυτων λογον*, and *reckoneth*, compares or adjusts the account, *with them;* his own gifts, and the use to which they were to be applied, and the increase which was required as the result, strictly compared with the actual use and improvement, or otherwise, of what had been intrusted to each servant. 3. That in each case the capital had been doubled by the faithful servants: *Behold, I have gained beside them* FIVE *talents more;—behold, I have gained* TWO *other talents beside them.* This was successful trading, and is designed to show the abundant increase of good which would be produced in the world by an entire fidelity in the discharge of all the active duties of the Christian life. This is a most animating motive to excite the zeal of Christians; and it is confirmed by fact. The decline of religion in the world has in all ages resulted, not so much from the obstinacy of the wicked, as from the slothfulness of Christ's servants. 4. That faithful services shall be publicly acknowledged and rewarded by Christ at his second advent. There was indeed no meritorious claim to peculiar distinction in the approved servants. They themselves were the lord's property; the money with which they traded was his; their time, abilities, and activity, equally belonged to him; yet here we see that "no work of faith, or labour of love," shall be forgotten. Commendation from the lips of such a Being, the acceptance of our persons and services by Him whose "favour is better than life," and the joys of heaven must, from their nature, be, not rewards of merit, but of stupendous grace. They are therefore subjects of promise to encourage us to fidelity, sustain us against temptation, and to show the regard which God has to all that is benevolent and holy in his creatures by stamping it with the seal of his munificent bounty. 5. The manner of conferring the reward, and its exalted nature are also to be noted. *Well done, ευ*, a word of force and emphasis; the word, indeed, with which the spectators, at any public performance or exercise, expressed their applause. Here it is pronounced by the Judge himself. *I will make thee ruler over many things.* The servant is now to be raised into the condition of *a ruler;* and the *few things* committed to him on earth, as a laborious and responsible trust, are heightened into *many things* put into his power to regulate and enjoy. Heaven is a place of order and government. This is indicated in various parts of the New Testament, though with their nature and laws we are not acquainted. It is implied in the words, "I will make thee ruler over many things," set thee over a greater and more honourable charge, where the heightened capacity shall still have employment, and be still exalted by it; and where the loftier service of Christ, in a more perfect form, shall bring still higher felicity. *Enter into the joy of thy Lord, εις την χαραν του κυριου σου.* Some take *χαρα* to signify a feast or entertainment; and the honour to be, that the servant is permitted to sit down with his royal Master. But though under this metaphor the heavenly reward is sometimes exhibited, we have a much better exposition of the phrase in the words of St. Paul, who, speaking of Christ, says that "for the joy set before him, he endured the cross," &c. That JOY was the glorification of his humanity in body and soul; and into that joy the faithful servant shall come, he too shall be glorified in his own person, and be like Christ. Thus he shall enter into joy; "enter," says an old writer, "as it were, into an abyss, a sea of joy, be every way surrounded with it, and dwell in it for ever." The same reward is conferred upon him who was faithful in *the two talents.* The trust was less, the "ability" smaller, but the *principle* of fidelity the same in both; and therefore the language of the rewarding judge the same. The absolute equality of the future rewards of the redeemed does not, perhaps, follow from this. The reward, however, is the same in kind, and equally felicitous, as filling the capacity with joy that has no deficiency. 6. The case of him that buried his *one talent* next presents itself. The excuses he makes for his conduct are not to be understood as describing any thing which shall be alleged at the great day of account; but as intended by our Lord to open the false views upon which the slothful palliate and disguise their neglects, and which, in the end, lead to so fatal a result. *I knew that thou art a hard man,*

saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him,

σκληρος, severe and unreasonable in thy demands upon thy servants, *reaping where thou hast not sown*, and *gathering*, collecting corn, *where thou hast not strewed*, or scattered seed; that is, exacting more from thy servants than they have ability to perform, or ought to be required of them. The key to this allegation of the slothful servant is to be found in the scope of the parable. Its design, as above stated, is to inculcate active usefulness; but our Lord had not hidden it from his disciples that the consequence of their fidelity and diligence in this respect would, in this world, be great reproach, persecution, and suffering, and that the true disciple must "deny himself and take up the cross." It is to these difficulties and sufferings in Christ's service that the slothful servant alludes. As this was the service, the master was concluded to be a *hard man*, and to make harsh and most unreasonable demands. The principle of sloth would magnify the difficulty, by looking at that alone, losing sight of the promised help and consolation; and a base, cowardly spirit would shrink from the danger. Hence those false views of Christ and his service were generated in the soul, and led to the desertion of duty. *And I was afraid;* yet this very fear ought to have roused his slothful spirit into exertion; but it was fear without love. So far, however, it operated, that he hid the talent in the earth to keep it safe; he did not misemploy, though he did not employ it; and for this negative virtue, such is the inconsistent reasoning of a deceived heart, he hoped even from him whom he esteemed a hard master to escape punishment: *Lo, there thou hast that is thine.* To this pretence how many answer! That many professed Christians are too slothful to be useful, is a melancholy fact; their talent is buried, their time, their abilities, their opportunities of doing good neglected; and the true reason will be found in the secret hard thoughts they have of the severity of Christ's service, and the difficulties, reproaches, and inconveniences to which it must expose them if they fully engage in it, and carry on an offensive warfare against the evils of the world, and endeavour strenuously to attain the highest degrees of salvation themselves and bring others into the same state. They shun therefore the cross, they evade difficulties, they retire into themselves, they put their light under a bushel, and hide their talent in the earth; and because they are not positively profane and wicked, because they do not absolutely abuse and misemploy their advantages, they still hope to escape condemnation. But what is the decision? The slothful servant is judged as a *wicked servant.* He is silenced upon his own principles: if the master was indeed severe and exacting, he ought at least, from his professed fear of him, *to have put his money to the exchangers*, that it might be rendered back with *usury*, or interest. He ought to have made some effort to improve the talent, though small and imperfect; and the absence of this showed that the true principle of fidelity was wanting, not only in degree, but altogether. His talent is taken from him, all his means and opportunities of getting good and doing good, and that for ever. These are multiplied to him who had the ten talents, but to the negligent they are for ever lost; and, as *unprofitable*, he is cast into *outer darkness* and torment. Weighty here are the words of Baxter: "Unprofitableness and omission of duty is damnable; unfaithfulness in us who are but stewards and servants. To do no harm is praise fit for a stone, and not for a man."

Verse 27. *The exchangers.*—They were called τραπεζιται, from the table which was placed before them; and not only exchanged one kind of coin for another, for the accom-

and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

2 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered

[c] Matt. xiii, 12; Mark iv, 25; Luke viii, 18.

modation of foreigners, or those going into foreign countries, but acted as bankers, taking money, and giving interest upon it.

Verse 29. *Unto every one that hath shall be given, &c.—To have*, εχειν, is here employed in the sense of to *use well*, or *profitably;* and *to have not*, signifies "not to possess to any valuable end." This is therefore the rule of the Divine government, that those who profitably use what is committed to them shall be esteemed worthy of a higher trust; and those who neglect to improve their advantages shall be deprived of them.

From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.—This form of speaking is found in other writers. Aristotle, in his Ethics, remarks "that he who has this or that, and makes no use of it, may not improperly be said both to have it and not to have it: ουτε και εχειν πως και μη εχειν." So also Plautus quotes a proverbial saying as to the avaricious, that "what they have, they have not; and what they have not, they have as an evil:" *quod habes ne habeas, et illud quod nunc non habes, habeas malum.* And Juvenal:—

Nil habuit Codrus, et tamen illud
Perdidit infelix totum nihil.

"Codrus had nothing, and yet all that nothing the wretch has lost." The Jews also have proverbs of a similar import to the former part of this axiomatic moral which our Lord subjoins to this parable. "The blessed God gives not wisdom but to him that has or uses wisdom." "If one adds, it is added to him; and if he lessens, it is lessened to him."

Verse 30. *The unprofitable servant.*—Those who take αχρειον in the general sense of *bad* or *wicked*, lose sight of the scope of the parable itself. That this servant was *bad* is true, but in a particular sense, because he was UNPROFITABLE through his sloth.—The proper meaning of αχρειος is therefore *useless.*

Verse 31. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, &c.*—To the two parables just given, our Lord adds in conclusion a magnificent and solemn description of that second advent to which he had referred under the veil of figurative language as the coming of the bridegroom, and the return of a master from a far country to reckon with his servants. So far, therefore, as the same event is spoken of in the following verses, in express terms, which had previously been couched under metaphor, this description may be considered as explanatory of the two preceding parables. Still as by each of these parables there is a particular moral enforced, so this more elaborate and particular description of the general judgment has its particular point of instruction. As the parable of the virgins was designed to inculcate the deep and persevering piety of the heart, and that of the talents the duty of active religious usefulness, so this scenic representation of the judgment appears to have been designed particularly to impress upon his followers the duty of works of mercy; and the three taken together complete the picture of the truly Christian man. As the lamp is supplied with oil from the vessel, so his profession of Christ's religion is grounded in a renewed state of heart, kept under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit; as the laborious and faithful servants rightly apply and profitably use their talents, whether five or two, so he employs his powers and opportunities in the service of Chrfst for the enlargement of his kingdom of grace among men; and as delivered by the transforming spirit of the religion he has cordially embraced from all malevolence, avarice, and selfishness, he does good, not only to the souls but to the bodies of men, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, receiving strangers, and visiting the sick and the captive.—Thus does our Lord unfold by this series of striking discourses the hallowing nature and practical influence of his religion, in contrast with those earthly and carnal views which the Jews entertained of the dispensation to be established by Messiah at his coming.—To renew the heart, to connect outward godliness with its principles and affections as its source, to make saved man the instrument of saving others by his charitable sympathy and exertions, and to open the springs of a true benevolence, so that they might flow forth in all works of mercy and kindness to the destitute and miserable—these were to be the glorious effects of his spiritual dominion established over the hearts of men, these his victories and triumphs, and these the tests of a true discipleship and a well founded hope of eternal life. To such as bear these characters and bring forth these

all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them

fruits only, he looks with acceptance; and the cultivation of them he urges by all those arousing motives which can be drawn from his approbation, or from his blessing or curse in that day in which he shall come to judge the world.

Christ here again calls himself *the Son of man*, not simply in reference to his human nature, but as God-man Mediator, in allusion to the prophecy of Daniel, where under this title he is represented as receiving a universal kingdom. Of this kingdom, the last act is to judge the world, and to distribute the rewards and penalties of eternity.—This Son of man comes therefore not in his humility, nor even in his spiritual power and invisible, gracious influence, but personally in that visible glory in which he now "sitteth at the right hand of God." *And all the holy angels with him*, to give greater splendour to the solemn pomp; to take their part in gathering together the elect; and to be the spectators of a scene which is to minister instruction and admonition to them for ever. *Then shall he sit* as a Sovereign and a Judge *upon the throne of his glory?* a Hebraism for his glorious throne. The same imagery we have in Rev. xx, 11, "And I saw a great white," or dazzling "throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away."

Verse 32. *Before him shall be gathered all nations.*—So that this is clearly the general and final judgment; not merely the Jewish nation or the Christian Church is to be judged, but *all nations;* those who shall then be alive; and "the dead, small and great, stand before God." Here is not only an assembled world, but the assembled generations of the world, from the beginning of time, placed at his bar, awaiting his sentence. Merely human writers have nothing so awfully sublime as this; for they had no distinct knowledge of the great facts here described in language so clear and simple as could never have been used but by HIM to whom the mysterious solemnities of the future were all clearly known.

He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd, &c.—This is done with unerring penetration, and with infinite equity, the vast multitude moving to the right hand or to the left under the influence of his mighty power, the consciousness of each answering to the impulse, and, as to the wicked, withering every effort at resistance. The metaphor is taken from the shepherds of ancient times, who kept the sheep and goats in different flocks, and hastily separated them when they became mingled together. A similar metaphor we have in Ezek. xxxiv, 17: "Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats."

Verse 33. *The sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.*—The former represent the righteous, and the latter the wicked, but not for any resemblance of qualities; on which supposition many absurd allegories have been formed by imaginative commentators. The idea intended to be conveyed appears to be simply that of as complete and obvious a separation between the good and the bad, as between a flock of sheep and a flock of goats. The designation of the wicked, as goats, would be, however, very forcible to a Jew; the same Hebrew word being used both for a goat and an evil spirit, or demon. With the Jews, the right hand, and left hand, in judicial proceedings, were highly significant. Maimonides states that in the sanhedrim two scribes stood before the judges, one on the right, the other on the left; and that the scribe on the right hand wrote the sentence of acquittal, and the scribe on the left hand the sentence of condemnation. Agreeably to which they have a saying, "There is a right hand and a left hand with the Lord; they that are on the right hand are for absolution, and they that are on the left hand are for condemnation." They are not, however, alone in this.—Plato, in his description of the judgment, which takes place in the invisible state, represents the judges as assigning the right hand to the just, and the left hand to the unjust.

Verse 34. *The King say.*—Our Lord, by calling him *the King*, again shows the nature of his kingdom, and tacitly corrects the prevalent errors of the Jews, the influence of which still obscured the judgment of the disciples, and rendered them inapt to receive spiritual views. Messiah is indeed a King; but he is here seen, not distributing earthly but heavenly rewards; not inflicting temporal but eternal punishments; not establishing an external dominion over men's persons, but prostrating their whole souls before him in holy love, or guilty dread; not setting up a visible kingdom on earth, but welcoming the righteous into the celestial and hallowed glories of the kingdom of his Father; not honouring his companions and subjects in arms after a warfare of "confused noise and garments rolled in blood," but crowning those who had by the strength of his grace overcome themselves, the world, and sin.

From the foundation of the world.—This phrase signifies from the creation of the world, and refers us to the designs and coun-

on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 [d] For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

[d] Isaiah lviii, 7; Ezekiel xviii, 7.

sels of God in eternity. It was his eternal purpose to raise to the felicity of heaven all who should truly believe in Christ, and endure faithful to the end of life. For them, AS BELIEVERS, not as a specific number selected arbitrarily from the mass of mankind, this state of "glory, honour, and immortality," here figuratively called a kingdom, was prepared. The creating power of God has produced and arranged it, and the entrance of our Saviour into "the holy places," with his own blood, has claimed it in behalf of all who embrace his universal offer of grace and eternal salvation. Heaven thus opens its gates for fallen man whose sin forfeited the inheritance of paradise; and whosoever will may enter, in the way, and on the gracious conditions which are laid down in the holy Gospel.

Verse 35. *For I was a hungered, &c.*—After this general sublime description of the pomp and solemnity of the final judgment, our Lord proceeds to give the reasons for this public acknowledgment of the righteous, and the equally public disowning of the wicked. These reasons, it is, however, to be remarked, are not the only ones in either case.—Neither are the wicked punished solely because they have been fruitless in works of mercy, nor the righteous solely because they have abounded in them. They are taken in each case as manifestations of CHARACTER; and they are specified to show the importance attached to them, and that where religion is not PRACTICAL, it is wholly false and delusive. That benevolent actions, separate from true charity, which is the love of God and man, cannot avail, we have the express testimony of St. Paul, who teaches that if a man "give all his goods to feed the poor, and have not charity," in the principle, "it profiteth him nothing;" while on the other hand St. James instructs us in the equally important truth, that "faith without works is dead," and therefore unsaving. The three great ends of Christ's religion are, to reconcile men to God, to renew the heart in righteousness, and to inspire that universal philanthropy which shall lead to the most beneficent acts of mercy to others; and as he had inculcated other virtues in preceding parables under the sanction of eternal rewards and punishments, so now, that he may present the picture of "the man of God made perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work," he exhibits the FRUITFUL faith and charity of his people in their practical benevolence, and confers upon their good works the high rewards of his kingdom.

Verse 36. *And ye visited me.*—The word επισκεπτομαι signifies not only *to look upon*, but *to look after;* that is, to take care of, or relieve; and may comprehend the administration of both spiritual and temporal comfort.

And ye came unto me.—With sympathy and aid, either to sustain in prison or to devise means to obtain liberation from it.

Verse 37. *Lord, when saw we thee a hungered? &c.*—The manner in which the case was put, as though they had ministered to the Lord himself personally, excites their astonishment; and their modest forgetfulness of their own works, and the total absence of all idea of merit from their minds, rendering what was said more mysterious than it would otherwise have been, are circumstances finely touched; and with infinite skill they are made to give the greater force to the affecting truth, that what is done for the relief and comfort of persons in penury, sickness, and trouble, he regards as done to himself! *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* The benevolence of Christ could have no stronger a demonstration than this identification of himself with all poor and troubled persons throughout the world, and in all ages; and no motive to their charitable relief can be so moving and efficacious with us as this. It affords one of many instances, that when Christian morals are the same in substance as those taught by the wiser heathen, the former are not only presented unto us under more definite views, but enforced by motives beyond comparison more powerful. They have at once the authority of God, and the persuasive influence which results from an appeal to our purest and most influential affections. Those who restrain the term *brethren* to poor and destitute Christians, have no warrant from the words or from the scope of the discourse. To narrow up the obligations of beneficence to those of our own faith would have been rather in the spirit of Judaism than according to the liberal and expansive genius of Christianity; and it would greatly tend to that, were we taught to consider that those acts of mercy which are done "to the household of faith" are the

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in, or naked and clothed *thee?*

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, [e] Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And [f] these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

[e] Psalm vi, 8; Matt. vii, 23.

[f] Dan. xii, 2; John v, 29.

only works of that kind which shall be noticed and rewarded at the last day. The term *brethren* is therefore to be taken in its largest sense for all mankind. By taking upon him our nature, Christ became the brother of every man, and even in his exalted and glorified state, recognizes us under that relation.

Verse 41. *Prepared for the devil and his angels.*—He does not say that this everlasting fire was prepared for these evil spirits, as the kingdom of heaven was prepared for the righteous, "from the foundation of the world;" that is, from eternity, as a part of the counsel and design of God. But simply, that it is *prepared for the devil and his angels*, but contrary to that gracious purpose for which they were created. A glorious heaven they found prepared for them the moment they sprang into existence; and it was not until they actually fell, that Divine vengeance kindled up in one dark and doleful part of the universe an *everlasting fire* for the punishment of the disobedient. Into this same fire, and in company with these rebellious spirits, shall all the wicked be at last driven from the presence of Him who had never been to them an unrelenting Judge, had they not rejected him as a merciful and gracious Saviour.

Verse 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, &c.*—These words are decisive of the doctrine of the eternity of the punishment of the wicked; and no reasonings of men, the supposed certain indications from assumed principles of the Divine government, can avail against their clear and unequivocal meaning. Even Wakefield, a Socinian commentator, has noticed and admitted their force. It is observable that the same word of time is here employed by the evangelist to denote the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the just, in a future state; they are equally called EVERLASTING. Nor is there any passage in the whole New Testament which can be urged in defence of what is usually denominated the "proper eternity of hell torments," with greater propriety than the text before us. No one disputes the endless duration of the happiness reserved for the righteous in heaven; and why should the eternity of future punishment be controverted more than that, when the term applied to the duration of both is not merely of a similar import, but actually THE SAME?

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *The rulers conspire against Christ.* 6 *The woman anointeth his feet.* 14 *Judas selleth him.* 17 *Christ eateth the passover:* 26 *instituteth his holy supper;* 36 *prayeth in the garden:* 47 *and being betrayed with a kiss,* 57 *is carried to Caiaphas,* 69 *and denied of Peter.*

1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

2 [a] Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

[a] Mark xiv. 1; Luke xxii, 1; John xiii, 1.

CHAPTER XXVI. Verse 1. *All these sayings.*—All these discourses.

Verse 2. *Is the passover.*—This was one of the great annual festivals of the Jews.

3 [b] Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill *him*.

5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

[b] St. John, chap. xi, 47.

instituted with great solemnity by Divine direction, to commemorate the PASSING of the destroying angel OVER the houses of the Israelites, and their deliverance from Egypt. It was a grand instituted TYPE of our redemption, and therefore Christ is called "our PASSOVER sacrificed for us." The paschal sacrifice derives its appellation from פסח, which signifies, *to pass by* or *over*. In the Septuagint and the New Testament *το πασχα* signifies both paschal lamb, and also the paschal feast. The institution is explained Exodus xii, 27: "It is the sacrifice of THE LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." The victim was to be a male of the first year, without blemish, from the sheep or from the goats. It was chosen on the tenth day of the month Abib in every year, kept till the fourteenth day of the same month, and then slain in the evening. A lamb or a kid was killed in each family; and if the number of the family was not sufficient to eat it, they might associate two families together. It was eaten with unleavened bread, and was followed by the seven days of unleavened bread, so that the whole feast lasted eight days.

These words seem to have been spoken by Jesus on the fourth day of the week, that is, on Wednesday in the afternoon; and on Thursday in the evening, that is, on the evening which followed the fifth day, the passover began, and was continued from Thursday evening to Friday evening, when the Sabbath, or seventh day, began.

Is betrayed.—Will be delivered up; the present being put for the future, as a significant manner of denoting a certain and approaching event.

Verse 3. *The palace of the high priest Caiaphas.*—Αυλη, rendered *palace*, properly signifies an enclosed area, open to the air; but is often applied, as here, to the whole mansion or palace of kings, or persons in authority. Caiaphas was the high priest at this time, and during the whole period in which Pilate was governor. He married a daughter of Annas, who also is called high priest, because he had long enjoyed that dignity. From Acts v, 17, it appears that Caiaphas was of the sect of the Sadducees.

Verses 4, 5. *That they might take Jesus by subtlety, &c.*—Ordinarily great criminals, and especially false prophets and raisers of sedition, were reserved for execution till the time of their great feasts, because the concourse of people at Jerusalem being so great on those occasions, it was thought that the example would be more influential. But in the case of our Lord they were anxious to dispense with this custom, and to put him to death by stratagem. *But they said, Not on the feast, lest there should be an uproar*, a popular tumult, *among the people*. At these festivals it appears from Josephus that tumults of a formidable kind often took place, a seditious and restless spirit having long been nursed by the peculiar political circumstances of the nation. And doubtless had our Lord designed to proclaim himself a king, and to assume the earthly attributes with which they invested the Messiah, and which probably they feared, and had he laid any plans for that purpose, vast numbers of the people, as especially those from Galilee, would have declared in his favour. His enemies therefore appear to have designed to leave the matter until the festival of the passover and unleavened bread, which together occupied a space of eight days, had terminated, and the mass of the people had dispersed. Our translators have rendered, *μη εν τη εορτη, not on the feast day;* thereby confining it to the day of the passover merely; whereas it ought to be extended to the seven succeeding days of unleavened bread, and have been simply rendered *the feast*, the reason which they give for not apprehending Christ being equally forcible throughout the whole duration of the festival. The plan was changed by the offer of Judas to betray him, and the whole was overruled by Heaven to accomplish its own purposes; which were, not that Christ should be put to death privately by assassination, or even by regular trial, when there should be comparatively few to witness his death, and the strange signs which accompanied it; but that there should be multitudes of witnesses of this event, that it should take place when many thousands of Jews and proselytes from all parts were assembled at Jerusalem, and that the account both of his crucifixion and resurrection should be transmitted by these means to distant places, and finally, as one has well observed, that infidelity should never have it to allege that these capital events, which constitute the very basis of our religion, were "done in a corner."

Verse 6. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, &c.*—The time when this transaction took place is not particularly marked by St. Matthew, and appears to have been mentioned here in connection, as an introduc-

6 ¶ [c] Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat.*

8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said

[c] Mark xiv, 3; John xi, 1.

tion to the treachery of Judas, because he was the first and loudest to murmur at the waste of the costly unction by which our Lord was anointed. In this, St. Mark follows St. Matthew; but St. John fixes the time six days before the passover, and manifestly describes the same transaction. The principal apparent discrepancy is, that the other evangelists say that it took place in the house of Simon the leper, that is, Simon who had been a leper; whereas in the narrative of John, Martha is represented as "serving," from which it has been concluded that the entertainment was made for him in the house of Lazarus. But St. John only says that "he came to Bethany," and that "they made him a supper," without mentioning the house in which it was provided. That it was not in the house of Lazarus, appears almost certain from the remark of the same evangelist, that "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him;" words which designate him as a *guest* rather than as the *host*. And as this Simon was evidently a friend of our Lord, and neighbour to the family that "Jesus loved," or perhaps a relation also, there is no improbability that Martha should serve in honour of such a guest, and that her sister Mary should anoint him. That St. Matthew and St. Mark should not mention Mary by name, arose probably from their having omitted all account of the raising of Lazarus, which appears to have been designed by the Holy Spirit to be related by one of the four only, that we might possess it in that more extended form and interesting particularity in which it appears in the affecting narrative of John, who was an eye witness. Some critics, however, think that St. John does not assert that this unction of our Lord occurred "six days before the passover," but only asserts that at that time "he came to Bethany," where he was afterward anointed two days before the passover, as it is most natural to infer from the narrative of St. Matthew. To this it may be answered, that the note of time in St. John, "six days before the passover," appears to be introduced for no purpose except to mark the period of the entertainment given to Christ at Bethany. On this often controverted point, the observations of Koinoel appear most satisfactory: "Since Matthew himself has not noted the time explicitly, but has used a phrase not indicative of definite time, *τον δε Ιησου γενομενου εν Βηθανια*; since John has narrated the event more copiously and elaborately; since from the general style of composition in this passage of Matthew, it is plain that he is hastening to describe the treachery of Judas, and the last fate of his Master; since moreover Mark, especially when hastening to any other subject, is accustomed to write concisely, omit various circumstances, and neglect the order of time; therefore I apprehend that respecting the order of time, John is to be rather attended to, who seems to have supplied what Matthew had omitted, in order to indicate the motive which impelled Judas to the deed; namely, avarice." The anointing of our Lord in the house of Simon the Pharisee, as recorded in Luke vii, 37, is quite a distinct transaction, done at a distant place, and at a much earlier period, and by another person.

Verse 7. *An alabaster box of very precious ointment.*—The alabaster is thought to have been a species of onyx, of which vessels for holding the more precious kind of perfumes were at first made, and the name was retained when afterward they were made of gold, or any other substance. St. Mark says, she *brake* it; but this is to be understood of breaking the seal by which the mouth was stopped, in order to pour out the contents. It is the custom in eastern countries still to stop the bottles which contain essences, with cotton, and to seal them with wax; in which form that costly perfume, the attar of roses, is still imported into this country. To anoint the head and the feet of guests was a mark of respect at considerable entertainments. It was done frequently in honour of the rabbins; but in this case the action was remarkable, as done, not by the host, but by Mary the sister of Lazarus, one of the guests, and also from the very valuable kind of unction made use of, and the abundance which she poured not only on our Lord's sacred *head*, but also, as appears from St. John, on his feet. The whole was the result of Mary's fervent affection for her Lord and Master.

Verses 8, 9. *They had indignation, &c.*—They all strongly exclaimed against what appeared to be an unnecessary waste of so precious an oil, and the profusion with which it was expended. All were sincere in objecting that its value might have been given

unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 [d] For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the

[d] Deuteronomy, chap. xv, 11.

to the poor as a more pious work, except Judas. He, indeed, appears to have been foremost and loudest in expressing this sentiment, and therefore he is represented by St. John as speaking for the rest; but we have in this the key of his character, and of that act of treacherous folly and wickedness which he was now meditating to commit. "This, he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." Judas fell therefore by the blinding and infatuating sin of covetousness, which led him first to fraud, then to treason. The disciples, in Mark, estimate the value at "three hundred pence," or denarii, upward of nine pounds of our money. This is not incredible, although the vessel might not be of large size; for a very small phial of attar of roses is sold at Constantinople for six pounds; and this "oil of nard," if not the same, appears to have been highly concentrated and equally precious. See note on Mark xiv, 3.

Verse 10. *Why trouble ye the woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me.*—It was a work of LOVE, and therefore determined by our Lord to be a good work. The benevolence of our Lord's character here also shines forth: he would not suffer this excellent woman to be *troubled* by the objections of his disciples, as tending to render it doubtful to her conscience whether she had done right or wrong; and he hastens therefore to give her the grateful assurance of his acceptance of her deed. But the WISDOM of his defence of her conduct is as conspicuous as its kindness. He defends it as a singular act performed in peculiar circumstances, but not so as to relax the obligation of the great duty of caring for the poor: *for ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always*, "These words," as Whitby acutely remarks, "wholly destroy the doctrine of transubstantiation," and the corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament; for, in that case, indeed, Christ would be always with them, and they might pay him marks of respect.

Verse 12. *She did it for my burial.*—Not intentionally on the part of Mary; but as the anointing was so profuse and costly, it might well appear to be a funeral rite, in which great expense was allowed by custom in the case of distinguished persons. "And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a very great burning" of odoriferous substances "for him," 2 Chron. xvi, 14. So, also, in the case of our Lord, "they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment," Luke xxiii, 56. Our Lord's death being so near, he speaks of it as already come: "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this," John xii, 7; thus representing the act of Mary as the embalming of a deceased friend, and justifying its profusion by their own customs. So affectingly present and certain was his approaching death to his mind, and with such calm dignity and resignation did he advert to it, although as he knew the time so he knew all its circumstances of pain, ignominy, and desertion!

For my burial.—The word ενταφιαζειν includes all the rites and customs which usually preceded or attended the actual burial, as washing, anointing, embalming, &c. St. Mark has it, "She hath done what she could," she hath in this act put forth the utmost strength of her affection; "she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."

Verse 13. *This Gospel.*—By the *Gospel* our Lord doubtless means his doctrine or religion; and when he declares that the history of this particular event should be made known wherever that should be *preached*, a tacit intimation is given that a written record of his life, embracing this incident, should also accompany it; for the memory of this transaction could only thus be preserved. From this we may conclude that it was always in his intention that a body of sacred Scriptures should accompany the oral proclamation of his doctrine in every place; and that as the inspired writings were not designed to render preaching unnecessary, so the living ministry was never intended to exclude the inspired writings.

A memorial of her.—The meaning is, an honourable memorial. It brings to mind the amiable and devout character of Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his words with an attention which absorbed every other care; as one of a family specially honoured by our Saviour's friendship, and who, in this instance, from the fulness of her grateful love, paid him special honour in acknowledgment of his dignity as the true Messiah, and for the spiritual benefits which she had received. Hers was in truth an "everlasting deed,"

whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

[e] Mark xiv, 10;

bound up in the immortality and unchanging endurance of the imperishable record in which it is commemorated, not for her sake only, but to show in how benign and condescending a manner our blessed Lord accepts every thing which is done from an affectionate regard to him as our Teacher and Redeemer, and to honour him in the presence of the world. The lovely picture of simple and elevated piety in Mary stands for ever in the record, for the imitation of all. Docility, attention, spirituality, and affection, are its characteristics.

Verse 14. *Then one of the twelve.*—The adverb of time, τοτε, is of indefinite signification. Here it is not certainly to be understood as indicating that, immediately after the anointing of Jesus by Mary, the traitor departed upon his unholy errand: for we have seen that this account is introduced chiefly to afford a key to his character, and that it took place in fact some days before. The τοτε rather connects what follows with verse 3, where the chief priests, &c., are said to have assembled in the palace of Caiaphas, to consult how they might by stratagem put Christ to death. To this assembly, it would seem, Judas went, and made the offer of betraying his Master into their hands. That which rendered this overture acceptable to them was, that by his means they would be able to discover his retirement, and so apprehend him while the people remained ignorant of it. Hence St. Mark observes, "they were glad, and promised to give him money;" and St. Luke, "that he sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude."

Verse 15. *What will ye give me, &c.*—Every thing here is in keeping with the character of Judas. Avarice was his leading passion; and he is anxious to make a good and secure bargain before he ventures upon his villany. *What will ye give me?* And however strange and inexplicable his conduct may at first sight appear, the fact of his being under the dominion of this absorbing passion will sufficiently account for it. His state was probably at first that of a sincere and teachable disciple; or it is difficult to conceive that our Lord would have called him into the number of his apostles. But his carrying the bag which contained the common stock of money for themselves and the poor, and which appears to have been replenished from time to time by the offerings of a few more opulent disciples, who ministered to our Lord of their substance, became, it is likely, the first cause of his fall. As he

14 ¶ [e] Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15 And said *unto them*, What will ye

Luke xxii, 3.

is called "a thief," he probably began by applying part of this common stock to his own private use; and his natural avarice being thus awakened and fed, his heart became obdurate, his conscience seared, and his judgment blinded. The very circumstance of our Lord's declining to avail himself of so many favourable opportunities of declaring himself a king, and turning the tide of popular feeling in his favour, might also operate upon his earthly and disappointed mind, and lead him greatly to doubt or utterly to disbelieve that he was the Messiah he once believed him to be. With all this there was the busy agency of Satan. "The unclean spirit had gone out" of this man; but finding "the house from which he had gone out swept and garnished" by this worldliness of temper, avarice of gain, and indulgence of a petty dishonesty, he again entered, and his "last state became worse than the first." Of the truth of this parable the wretched Judas was an awful instance, and warns all against returning again to the dominion of any one guilty passion. "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them," Luke xxii, 3, 4. Several conjectures, as to the motives by which Judas was influenced, have been indulged in by commentators; as, that he thought that Jesus would deliver himself by miracle, and so he should cheat the priests out of their money, and his Master sustain no injury; or that he might compel his Master, by putting him into the hands of his enemies, to show forth his power and declare himself a king. But the fair inference, from the account of the evangelists, is, that he entered upon an act of deliberate treachery toward Christ himself, under the influence of his own covetousness and the agency of Satan.

Thirty pieces of silver.—These were shekels, of the value of about four drachmas, or about two shillings and sixpence. The whole sum would therefore be about three pounds fifteen shillings. Some MSS. instead of αργυρια read στατηρας; but the value of the shekel and the stater was the same. Thirty pieces of silver, or shekels, was the usual price of a slave. Hence it was enacted, Exodus xxi, 32, "If an ox shall push a man servant or maid servant, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver." But as so small a sum appears to have been too inconsiderable to induce Judas to this act and such as the chief priests would scarcely

give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

17 ¶ [f] Now the first *day* of the *feast*

[f] Mark xiv, 12; Luke xxii, 7.

think of offering to accomplish an object they had so much at heart, some have thought the pieces of silver were the Talmudic *mina*, each of the value of three pounds; and more especially as it might seem that this sum was sufficient to buy the potter's field. But the field, having been dug up for potteries, and exhausted, was probably of little value. The sum, however, actually paid, might be but an earnest of a larger reward, should he fulfil his engagement. This is the view of Rosenmuller and Michaelis; and it might be restricted to the thirty pieces of silver by an overruling Providence in order to fulfil a prophecy, which is quoted in the course of the history by the evangelist, and which will, in its proper place, be considered. See chap. xxvii, 9. The guilty bargain being concluded, *from that time he sought* ευκαιριαν, *a favourable opportunity to betray him.* Nor was he long in finding what he sought; for occasions of sin soon present themselves to those disposed to sin.

Verse 17. *The first day of the feast of unleavened bread.*—This was in the morning of the day, in the evening of which the passover was killed before the setting of the sun. The obligation to abstain from unleavened bread did not properly commence till the paschal supper; yet, for fear of offending the law, the Jews put away all leavened bread from their houses on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, before the lamb was killed. This day appears, therefore, to have been popularly called *the first day of unleavened bread.* As the Jews began their day in the evening, the fifteenth day, when the paschal supper was eaten, commenced on the evening of the fourteenth, according to our mode of computing days. Lightfoot, on Jewish authorities, thus describes the manner of killing the paschal lambs: "The lambs are killed only in the temple, in the usual court of other sacrifices, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, after noon, and after the daily sacrifice. The Israelites bring the lambs on their shoulders; the trumpets sound; the priests stand in order; the Israelites kill each a lamb; a priest receives the blood in a silver or golden phial, and gives the full phial to the next, who returns him an empty one. Thus the blood is handed to the altar, and sprinkled or poured out against the foot of it. The lamb is flayed, the fat burned on the altar, and the body carried back and eaten where they sup." It is, however, doubtful whether the priests had this immense labour imposed upon them. Philo, in three places of his works, expressly says that "by the appointment of the law every Jew was permitted to kill his paschal lamb, and to be so far his own priest, though in no other instance. In this Philo and Josephus appear to be at issue, the latter assigning that office to the priests; and nothing can be clearly gathered from the law on the subject, Exod. xii, 6, 8, and Deut. xvi, 6, but that it was to be killed in the evening of the fourteenth day, and eaten that night, "in that place only where God should place his name;" that is, where the tabernacle was first placed, and then where the temple was erected.

A difference of opinion exists among commentators on the question whether our Lord actually ate this Jewish passover, or instituted the eucharist at a common supper; or anticipated the usual time of the passover by a day; or ate it at the same time as the rest of the Jews. Nothing theologically important depends upon the solution of these points, some of which are certainly attended with a little difficulty. It must, however, be fairly concluded, from the three first gospels, that he not only ate the paschal, and not a common supper, but that he did so at the same time in which it was eaten by, at least, the generality of the Jews. It is certain, from St. Matthew's account, that the disciples made ready *the passover*, previous to the evening on which he instituted his own supper. St. Mark characterizes "the first day of unleavened bread," on which the disciples were commanded to prepare the passover, as the day "when THEY," that is, the Jews, "killed the passover;" and St. Luke says, "then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed," εν η εδει θυεσθαι το πασχα, Luke xxii, 7. All these three evangelists therefore agree, 1. That on this day, Thursday, the Jews killed the passover. 2. That the disciples of Christ, under his direction, prepared it for him; and, 3. That he supped upon it in the evening, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The only difficulty, therefore, consists in reconciling this statement with John xviii, 28, where the Jews are said, early on Friday morning, to refuse to go into the judgment hall, "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover;" and to John xix, 14, where the noon of Friday is called "the preparation of the passover." To explain this, it has been said that it appears from the Talmud and rabbinical writings, that, in cases of doubt respecting the time of the appearance of the new moon, from which they commenced their monthly reck-

of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

oning, the passover was permitted to be holden on both of the days between which the doubt lay; for the Jews did not regulate their months by astronomical calculations, but by the actual appearance of the new moon, which sometimes created disputes; and Dr. Cudworth quotes Epiphanius to show that there was a contention respecting the time of the passover this very year. It is therefore inferred that though a part, probably the greater part, of the Jews celebrated the passover on the same day as our Lord, yet others, as many of the scribes and Pharisees, did it on the day following. Against this solution there lie, however, several objections; as, that the senate sat in form to receive the report of witnesses who had seen the new moon, and that by their decision upon their testimony the feasts were regulated. Nor is there any indication in the gospels of any difference of opinion on the subject on the year in question; which negative evidence is probably stronger than the assertion of Epiphanius at so great a distance of time. Nor is the conjecture probable that, in our Lord's days, on account of the immense numbers assembled at this feast, necessity compelled them to occupy two days. For the law is express as to the day on which the whole assembly were to perform this solemn rite. These obvious objections may not be fatal to the above solution of the difficulty; but they render it less satisfactory. But the passages just referred to in St. John's gospel are capable of another explanation, which seems fully to meet the case. On the day following the passover, and throughout all the days of unleavened bread, sacrifices of sheep and oxen were daily offered in abundance, and feasted upon. "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose," Deut. xvi, 2. This passage not only shows that sacrifices from the flock and herd were offered at that season, but the whole ceremonial, including these offerings, is called THE PASSOVER, no doubt because of its immediate connection with what was properly such. In Numbers xxviii, 18, &c., we find that for the day following the proper paschal feast particular offerings were prescribed, and this day and the seventh are particularly distinguished as days of "holy convocation;" and in the account of the celebration of the passover in the time of Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxv, not only are the "lambs and kids" for the paschal sacrifice, but the "oxen" and other cattle for the offerings on the days of the feast, called "passover offerings." When, therefore, St. John tells us that the Jews entered not into the judgment hall, "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover," he uses the term, as Dr. Campbell well observes, in the same latitude as Moses and the writer of the Chronicles; and "no more is meant by eating the passover than partaking in the sacrifices offered during the days of unleavened bread." The other passage in this evangelist, when, speaking of the day of our Lord's crucifixion, Friday, he remarks, "and it was the preparation of the passover," ην δε παρασκευη τού πασχα, Dr. Campbell renders, "Now it was the preparation of the paschal Sabbath;" and observes, "the word παρασκευη in the New Testament denotes always, in my opinion, the day before the Sabbath, and not the day which preceded any other festival, unless that festival fell on the Sabbath." He gives his reasons at length; to which may be added that Nonnus, the Greek paraphrast of this gospel, seems to have understood the word παρασκευη in the same manner, and to have used a Greek copy which had not τον πασχα in it. He paraphrases the passage, *the sixth day of the week, which they call προσαββατον, the preparation of the Sabbath.* The "preparation of the passover" it could not be; for although we should allow, contrary to Campbell's opinion, that the day preceding any feast was called its preparation, then if Friday, the day of our Lord's crucifixion, was the day of the passover properly so called, it could not be the *preparation of the passover.* Either, therefore, we must render the words, "the preparation of the paschal Sabbath," with Campbell, or adopt a different reading with Nonnus. Thus the account of John is in perfect harmony with that of the other evangelists; and the conclusion of the whole is, that our Lord not only ate the paschal feast with his disciples, and that on the Thursday evening, the evening before his crucifixion; but also at the same time as the rest of the Jews, according to the obvious sense of the narrative in the three first gospels. Several commentators appear to have been misled on this point by an anxiety to make the death of Christ to correspond with the very time when the paschal lambs were slain, in order to show a more exact correspondence between the type and the antitype. But this is being "wise above what is written," and shows an anxiety to establish a circumstance by no means important. It is enough for us to know that, during the feast of the Jewish passover, Christ our passover was sacrificed for us; and that by engrafting upon this commemorative feast that of his own commemorative supper, he has indubitably marked the typical relation between them.

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 [g] Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, [h] He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is

[g] Mark xiv, 18; Luke xxii, 14; John xiii, 21.

[h] Psalm xli, 9.

Verse 18. *To such a man.*—Whether our Lord mentioned his name or not, does not appear; the means of finding him was, however, appointed. From the other evangelists we learn that the signal was to be their meeting a man with a pitcher of water, probably a servant; and, following him, they were to bespeak "a guest chamber" from the owner of the house into which he should enter; a proof to the disciples of their Lord's perfect knowledge of future contingencies. The disciples had previously inquired, *Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?* for they might make use of any house where there was room, the inhabitants of Jerusalem affording their rooms gratuitously to all who applied at this festival; and the Jews say in praise of their ancient city, "A man could never say to his friend, I have not found a fire to roast the passover lamb in Jerusalem; nor, I have not found a bed to sleep on, in Jerusalem; nor, The place is too strait for me to lodge in, in Jerusalem." The master of this house was probably favourable to our Lord, or the house was selected for privacy, for sometimes two companies ate their passover not only in the same house, but in the same room. Our Lord celebrated the passover at the head of his disciples, as his family; for though it was properly a family office to be performed by the natural head, yet when the family was small two or more were united, and in other cases individuals agreed to make up a passover company who stood in no natural relation to each other. In this case one presided, as though he had been master of the house.

My time is at hand.—Those who think that this expression indicates that our Lord ate the passover at a different time from the rest of the Jews, a time of his own appointing, forget that this is precisely the mystical phrase which he often used to intimate his death and passion. Neither his disciples nor the master of the house can be supposed to have at that time comprehended its import.

Verse 19. *They made ready the passover.*—They purchased one of the lambs which were on sale, and which had previously undergone the inspection of the priests, had it killed, and the blood sprinkled at the foot of the altar, brought it to the house, provided the bread, wine, bitter herbs, the sauce in which the herbs were dipped, and all other necessary things for the due celebration of the rite.

Verse 20. *He sat down.*—He *reclined*, ανεκειτο; for the recumbent posture at meals, and even at the paschal supper, had long been introduced, although the Israelites were at first commanded to eat it standing, with staffs in their hands, as persons setting out on a journey. The rabbins justified, and indeed enjoined, this departure from the original institution, on the ground that this recumbent posture was symbolical of that rest in the land of Canaan, to which the Israelites at first were but setting out, but which they had attained.

With the twelve.—Judas, having transacted his infamous bargain with the chief priests, had now returned and taken his place with the rest, little reflecting that he and all his secret negotiations were well under the eye of his omniscient Master.

Verse 21. *One of you shall betray me.*—That he said this in a very solemn and impressive manner, appears not only from the effect produced upon all except Judas, but from the words of St. John, chap. xiii, 21, "He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

Verse 22. *They were exceeding sorrowful.*—Sorrowful that he should be betrayed; more so that the traitor, whoever he might be, should be one of themselves. Each, save Judas, appears to have been thrown back upon himself, searching himself whether he could be capable of so great a wickedness; and *every one of them*, Judas not excepted, but he hypocritically, *began to say, Lord, is it I?*

Verse 23. *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.*—The custom of taking food by the hand out of the same dish is still practised in eastern countries where knives and forks are not in use. This was the case at common meals; but the paschal feast was not prepared to be eaten in this manner. It is true that there were several small dishes

written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 ¶ And as they were eating,

served up containing a peculiar kind of sauce, חרוסת, into which they dipped unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs used with the passover; and it was in one of these that our Lord dipped the sop he gave to Judas, by which act he pointed out the traitor to the other disciples; but this was done subsequently, and the text is to be understood generally to intimate that some one who familiarly ate with him should be his betrayer, which agrees with the words of St. Mark, "And he answered and said, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish." Thus Judas was not yet particularly pointed out; but as we learn from St. John, Peter after this prompted the disciple "whom Jesus loved," to ask of whom he spoke; and when this disciple, who was St. John himself, and was "lying on Jesus's breast," that is, reclining on the same couch and next to him, said, "Lord, who is it?" Christ answered, and probably in an under voice, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop," a portion of the unleavened bread, "when I shall have dipped it" in the sauce provided as usual for the paschal supper. It was after this, that Satan, whose influence had already been exercised upon Judas,—who now had added to all his former wickedness, that of playing the hypocrite on this occasion, by affecting to be sorrowful, as well as the rest of the disciples, at the news of Christ being about to be betrayed, and had inquired like them, "Lord, is it I?"—more fully possessed that unhappy man, who had willingly surrendered himself to his power; and then, impelled by Satan through his own passions, Judas went out to perpetrate his villany, having probably first learned that Christ, after the supper, intended to retire to the mount of Olives, a favourable solitude for his apprehension.

Verse 24. *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, &c.—He goeth,* υπαγει, that is, to death, he *departs*, a euphemism for dying; and that this is the sense here, appears from the reference made to the prophetic writings which speak of that event. It was predicted that he should die; and designed that he should die, but this did not excuse or palliate the acts of the instruments of his death. They followed freely their own will, and gratified their own malignity, and were therefore guilty of the most aggravated crime of religious persecution and murder which ever was or could be committed. Hence our Lord adds with respect to Judas, *But wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed;* for the foreknowledge of God cannot any more influence human actions as foreknowledge, than afterknowledge. To know, is one thing; to influence and compel, another. St. Chrysostom therefore well observes that "Judas was not a traitor because God foresaw it; but God foresaw it, because Judas would be so."

It had been good for that man if he had not been born.—It had been *better* for him, (the positive being used for the comparative,) never to have had an existence than to be doomed to eternal shame and punishment. This passage is conclusive against Judas's repentance and forgiveness in this life, and equally cogent to prove the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. For if all lapsed intelligences are to be restored to happiness, then Judas must be among the number; and if so, since, however long the punishment may be, it is but temporary, and the ultimate felicity eternal; it could not be said that it had been better for him not to have existed.

Verse 25. *Thou hast said.*—Judas addresses Christ, not by the usual term, κυριε, Lord, but by the title of rabbi. Some think that he was thereby disposed to show our Saviour less respect than the other disciples; but, on the contrary, he feigned to show him greater; for κυριος, though capable of the highest sense as applied to God, was in general use as a term of ordinary civility to any superior, or even equal; and when used without intended and obvious inference, often answers to our SIR. But rabbi was exclusively used as a title of high reverence; and the application of it here to our Lord by Judas, was in perfect correspondence with the rest of his conduct at the supper, when he affected to disguise his designs by an apparent sorrow that he should think himself in any danger, by endeavouring to clear himself like the rest, and in this instance by giving our Lord a flattering title which he did not usually receive.—Christ's reply, *Thou hast said*, is a Jewish form of assent or affirmation, equivalent to *It is thou.* This was probably said in a low voice, so that the rest did not distinctly hear it, like the answer of our Lord to John, when he pointed out the traitor; for as, when Judas went out as soon as he had received the sop, the other disciples thought, because he was the purse-bearer, that he was gone to procure things necessary for the feast; this would have been a most improbable supposition, had the words been uttered in their hearing. For the same reason we may conclude that what our Lord said to John when, upon the suggestion of Peter, he asked who

Jesus [i] took bread, and * blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

[i] 1 Cor. xi, 24.

* Many Greek copies have, *gave thanks.*

should betray him, was not only heard by the beloved disciple alone, but kept in his bosom, except that he might intimate it to Peter.—That after this Judas should remain and be present at the celebration of the eucharist, is highly improbable. From St. John we learn that, as soon as he had received the sop, which was during the eating of the passover, he went out; and though it has been supposed that he returned, because St. Luke introduces our Lord's words, "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table," after his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper; yet, as that evangelist manifestly brings in several miscellaneous discourses which appear to have been uttered at different intervals during the paschal supper, it is probable that he recorded this observation of our Lord without intending to mark the precise time of the evening when it was delivered.

The mode of celebrating the passover, as given by Maimonides, may form a proper introduction to the institution of the Lord's Supper, as mentioned in the following verses. 1. They mingled a cup of wine with water, and gave thanks. 2. They washed their hands. 3. The table was furnished with two cakes of unleavened bread, with bitter herbs, and with the paschal lamb roasted whole; all which were appointed by the law; also with other meats, as the remains of *chagigah*, or peace-offerings of the preceding day; and with a thick sauce made of dates, figs, raisins, vinegar, &c., mingled together, named *charoseth*, to represent the clay of which their ancestors made bricks in Egypt. 4. They ate first a small piece of the sallad of bitter herbs, and explained to the children the nature of the feast. 5. They took a second cup of wine, repeating Psalms cxiii and cxiv. These two Psalms were the first part of the hymn or hallel, which was composed of five Psalms, from Psalm cxiii to cxviii, inclusive. 6. Their hands were again washed, and the master proceeded to break and bless a cake of the unleavened bread, reserving a part of it under a napkin for the last morsel; for the rule was, to conclude with eating a small piece of the paschal lamb, or, after the fall of the temple, of unleavened bread. 7. The rest of the cake they ate with the *charoseth* or sauce and the bitter herbs. 8. Then the flesh of the peace-offerings, and the flesh of the paschal lamb were eaten; after which they again washed. 9. The third cup of wine, or cup of blessing, was filled, over which they gave thanks, and drank it. 10. Over the fourth cup of wine they completed the hallel or hymn of the five psalms, offered a prayer, and concluded.

Verse 26. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, &c.*—Some commentators render εσθιοντων αυτων, *when they had eaten*; but Rosenmuller, more consistently with the sense, *toward the end of the supper.* The paschal lamb had been eaten, but the bread which was reserved to be eaten last remained, and either the third cup, or cup of blessing, or the fourth concluding cup, or both were probably yet to be drunk; for that the paschal supper was not finished in all its ceremonies is evident from the concluding prayer being offered and the concluding hymn sung by our Saviour, after he had instituted his own ordinance. It appears, then, that after every thing pertaining to the passover as it was prescribed in the law had been observed, namely, the flesh of the lamb eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, our Lord dispensed with the customary additions to the ceremony, on which the law was silent, and took that part of the remaining bread which was usually reserved to be the last mouthful, and the cup which was with the Jews the third cup, or cup of blessing, and with these elements he instituted his supper. Instead, also, of the usual prayer, he offered that which is recorded in John xvii, and then sung the hymn, or concluding part of the hallel, which consisted of Psalms cxv to cxviii, inclusive; than which nothing could be more appropriate to the new ordinance, since they contain the strongest evangelical allusions. Previously, then, to the usual concluding ceremonies, *Jesus took bread*, τον αρτον, *the bread*, or CAKE, for in this form the bread of the Jews was made; and if there is any force in the article before *αρτον*, which is omitted in the parallel passages of St. Mark and Luke, but ought probably to have been retained, it points out the cake as that which had been reserved from the former part of the feast according to custom, but which was now to be employed to a higher purpose, as the emblem of the body of our Lord. This bread was unleavened; which has given rise to a dispute whether the Lord's Supper ought not still to be celebrated with unleavened bread. At an early age of the Church we find this regarded as an unimportant circumstance, and the Greek Church, and many of the reformed Churches use leavened bread without hesitation, while the Roman and Lutheran Churches make a point of using unleavened bread or wafers. As unleavened bread was the only kind at hand during the passover, and no allusion at all is made in the institu-

tion to it with respect to its quality as being without leaven, it is not probable that our Lord intended any importance to be attached to this circumstance. BREAD, considered as FOOD, appears to constitute the mystic emblem. Taking the bread, *he blessed.* Our translators have inserted IT; but this act of blessing was an act of thanksgiving to God, according to the practice of the Jews, who took no food or wine without first offering thanks to God. This was the office of him that presided at the feast. "He blesses," say the rabbins, "and then he breaks."—The rule also was, "If they sit at the meal, every one blesses for himself; but if they lie along," which marked a more formal meal, "one blesses for them all." To bless is to give thanks; hence St. Paul, when describing the institution of the supper of our Lord, instead of the term *blessings*, says, "when he had *given thanks*, he brake and said, Take, eat," &c. Whether our Lord used the same words in blessing God before this distribution of the bread, or others suited to the occasion of a distinct institution, immediately following the eating of the passover, does not appear. The probability is, that he did; for, as the bread had been broken, and distributed during the proper paschal supper, and eaten with the flesh of the lamb according to the law, he had, as the Master of the feast, already used the usual Jewish form of blessing, both over the bread and the wine; and now probably varied it in accordance with the rite which he was about to substitute for ever for the Jewish passover.

And brake it.—The object of the verb is here properly supplied, but there was nothing in the act of breaking peculiar to the eucharist. This was the manner in which bread was distributed in their common meals when one presided; the cakes being thin and brittle, and knives not being in use, nor indeed convenient for the purpose. As to the breaking of bread at the passover, the Talmud gives it as the rule, "The master of the house breaks neither a small piece, lest he should seem to be sparing; nor a large piece bigger than an egg, lest any should appear to be famished." Our Lord broke the bread, both when he fed the five thousand, and the four thousand; so that no mystery in the Lord's Supper appears to have been hidden, as some suppose, under this action. The bread was broken simply for convenient distribution to every one; so that there appears not the least reason to assume that breaking of bread is at all essential to the right administration of the ordinance. However the portions may be separated from the cake or loaf, is obviously a matter of indifference. It is true that St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi, 23, &c., makes the words of Christ to be, "Take, eat; this is my body which is BROKEN for you," which might seem to indicate that the broken bread was made an emblem of his wounded and torn body; but St. Paul's words can be no more than equivalent to those of the first institution, which, according to St. Luke, were "my body which is GIVEN for you;" so that the circumstance of being broken is used not in any emblematical sense, but with reference to the giving of the body of Christ for every one, as bread is broken to be given to every one at the same table. If the breaking of the bread had been a symbolical circumstance, all notice of it would scarcely have been omitted by the three evangelists, who record the institution with so much particularity.

Take, eat; this is my body. Here the great and true mystery of this holy sacrament commences. The bread is distributed to every one; every one is to *take;* every one is to *eat;* and that which is thus taken and eaten, is the *body* of Christ; but the whole is emblematical. That the bread was not the real body of Christ, but only its emblem is proved equally to sense as to reason; for if it had been the body of Christ, or transubstantiated into his very body, then was the body of Christ *eaten* by the eleven apostles, while yet their Lord remained before them; and if the body of Christ was thus eaten by the disciples, what was it that Judas betrayed and delivered into the hands of the officers of the chief priests a few hours afterward? If the body of Christ had been disposed of by being eaten, that body could not have been taken into custody; and so Judas betrayed and Pilate crucified, not the body of our Lord, that is not our Lord himself, but a phantom; on the contrary, if the real body of Christ was betrayed and crucified, then it could not be eaten, except in emblem, at the first supper. Still farther, if the body of our Lord was not really and truly transubstantiated into the bread, and eaten at the first supper, as administered by Christ himself, as we see it could not be, then this transubstantiation could take place at no future time; for this is proved from the words of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me." Do what? Eat bread and drink wine; but if this was all they did at the first supper, and all they were to do at every succeeding celebration, then they could not, as the advocates of the real presence contend, eat bread, but flesh; not drink wine, but blood; and that under the appearance of both. So completely confuted is the monstrous fiction of transubstantiation, by the circumstances of the first supper; and with this convincing evidence of its utter and shocking absurdity, it is almost trifling to attempt to show critically that the words, *This is my body,* are equivalent to, This bread SIGNIFIES, or REPRESENTS, my body, *which is given for you.*

For since these words cannot, by any possibility, mean that the bread was really the body of Christ, for the plain reasons before given, the body of Christ could not be corporally given in the first supper to be eaten by the disciples: and if this is essential, as the papists pretend, to the true sacrament of the Lord's supper, then was not the first supper a true sacrament; and if the priest has now the power, by what is called "consecration," to transmute the bread and wine into the true body of our Lord, he pretends to do what our Lord himself did not, nor ever promised that his disciples should do; and so that which the believers in the real presence call the sacrament of the eucharist, is on their own principles something quite distinct from that instituted by our Lord; something, the origin of which cannot be traced to any institution of his, and on which the New Testament is not only silent, but to which it is opposed. Whatever meaning therefore may be attached to the phrase, *This is my body*, the meaning forced upon it by the transubstantialists cannot for a moment be entertained, being directly contradicted by the circumstances of the transaction itself. Nor less does this argument conclude against the doctrine of *consubstantiation*, or the real presence of the flesh and blood of our Lord WITH the elements of bread and wine in intimate union, though not changed into the same substance; which notion is represented under the comparison of the intimate, permeating presence of fire and red-hot iron, which is nevertheless not changed into the substance of the metal. For no such diffusion of the body of Christ could take place at the first supper, or a part only of our Lord's person was betrayed and crucified; and that defined and circumscribed body of our Saviour, which the disciples saw and conversed with was not his whole person; and it must follow among other absurdities, that the body of Christ was partly visible and partly invisible, partly defined, and partly indefinitely extended, with various consequences as revolting to reason and to the senses as those involved in the doctrine of transubstantiation itself. The words used by our Lord have, however, no real difficulty. Bishop Law has remarked that there is no term in the Hebrew language which expresses to *signify* or *denote;* and that the Greek here naturally takes the impress of the Hebrew or Syriac idiom, IT IS being used for IT SIGNIFIES. Hence the similar use of the substantive verb in various passages, "The three branches are three days," Gen. xl, 12. "The seven kine are seven years," Gen. xl, 26. "The ten horns are ten kings," Dan. vii, 24. "The field is the world," Matt. xiii, 38. "The seven candlesticks are the seven Churches," Rev. i, 20. But there is no need to resort to this form of speaking, as though it were peculiar to the Hebrew or Syriac of our Lord's age. It is a natural mode of expression common to most languages, and occurs constantly in our own; for, in pointing to a portrait, for instance, instead of saying, "This REPRESENTS the person for whom it is taken," we far more frequently use the shorter and more spirited form, "This IS the person himself." Still farther, it is to be remarked that our Lord's mode of speaking on this occasion was constantly used in the passover; for of this the Jewish writers afford sufficient evidence. The paschal lamb is, in many passages, produced by Buxtorf, called by them, "THE BODY of the passover;" and the master of the family said on breaking the bread, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt," by which he could only mean that the former REPRESENTED or was an EMBLEM of the latter.

But it is time to turn from this gross anti Christian perversion of Christ's holy ordinance to its noble and mystical import. Instead of this sacred rite being a carnal feeding upon the body of Christ, which in itself could have no connection with the sanctification of the heart and affections, it is a spiritual participation of the effect and benefits of his death, by which life and strength are given to the soul. Our Lord did not take the flesh of the paschal lamb, and make that an element of his own institution. That was all previously eaten according to the law, which He who came "to fulfil all righteousness," was scrupulous to observe. Moreover, this might have appeared indicative that animal sacrifices were to be continued under the new dispensation; whereas his "offering of himself once for all," abrogated them for ever. He therefore took the element of BREAD, which, by calling it *his body*, that is, the emblem or sign of his body, *given* for us, preserved as explicitly the essential idea of the sacrificial nature of his death, as if he had made the flesh of the paschal lamb the instituted sign. The connection of the emblem of bread with his "flesh," that is, his sacrificial death, is strongly marked in John vi, 51, &c.: "And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world;" words which plainly signify that men live by the death which he was voluntarily to endure as an atonement for their sins, and as the meritorious means by which all the blessings included in "life" were to be procured for them. As, therefore, the bread itself was an emblem of his body offered for our sins, so the taking and eating of the bread must be figurative in its import also, and denotes that reception of Christ's sacrifice, by which its benefits are personally communicated; which, as we are taught, throughout the whole New Testament, is done by a true FAITH. Thus, there-

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

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fore, to believe or trust in the sacrifice of Christ, is to "eat his flesh and drink his blood;" and from this results LIFE, which includes restoration to the Divine favour; the nourishment of the soul in spiritual vigour, —"He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," John vi, 57; and life or felicity in the world to come,—"He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever," John vi, 58. All these expressions show that it is the *life* of the soul of which our Lord speaks; which could not be affected by a carnal eating of the real body of our Lord; but which is communicated through that vital and renewing influence of God upon the heart which is procured for us by the meritorious death of our Saviour, effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and received by the instrumentality of trusting in Christ as the true and only sacrifice for sin: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me." Of this vital influence the Father is the source; and it flows into man, through Christ, by the instrumentality of eating or believing on him. Of these spiritual acts, the eating of bread and the drinking of wine in the Lord's Supper, are the established emblems; and he who truly receives those elements, discerning their intent, and exerting faith in the great object represented, which is Christ's sacrifice for sin, not only thus publicly and statedly professes his acceptance of that sacrifice as the only ground of his hope of salvation, and his sole dependence upon it, but actually derives to himself its stupendous benefits.

Verse 27. *And he took the cup.*—The Jews, in celebrating the passover, took four cups of wine mixed with water, which the master divided among those who composed the passover company. St. Luke mentions one cup taken and given by our Lord to the disciples before this, which he used in instituting his own supper. The cup, whether it were the third or fourth usually partaken of by the Jews in celebrating the passover, contained the other element by which his sacrificial death was emblematically represented in this ordinance; and this, like the remaining portion of the unleavened bread, was applied by Christ to a higher purpose: for this cup was not, by the law of Moses, made essential to the observance of the passover; and it is therefore noted by St. Luke, that he took "the cup after supper."

Drink ye all of it.—Since the cup was administered to ALL as well as the bread, the withholding of the cup from the laity by the priests of the papal Church, is a manifest corruption of this sacred rite, and destructive of the very nature of the ordinance itself. And if the cup ought to be withheld from the laity on the weak pretence that Christ made the apostles priests at this ordinance, and that it was to be confined to them, for the same reason the bread ought to be eaten by the priests only, and so this sacrament be confined to priests only, and the laity be excluded from all participation of either kind. The Romanists do not, however, err in mixing the sacramental wine with water, which was the custom at the passover. This was practised by the early Christians. The Jews used only red wine at their passover; which is to be preferred also for the Christian ordinance.

Verse 28. *For this is my blood of the New Testament.*—As the bread was the emblem of the body of Christ *given* to death for us, so the wine was the emblem of the blood of Christ shed for us. He was not to die a natural death, which might have been without shedding of blood, but a violent death; which marks its *sacrificial* character, for, like the ancient sacrifices, he was to be PUT TO DEATH, and his blood, like theirs, poured out before the Lord as an oblation. His blood is therefore called the blood of *the New Testament*, της καινης διαθηκης, of the NEW COVENANT, for so ought the word to be rendered; (see preface;) in which allusion is made, not to those heathen rites which some commentators have adduced to illustrate the passage; but to that solemn transaction in which Moses, having taken "the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people," took also "the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you," Exod. xxiv, 7, 8. This "book" contained the covenant made between God and the Church and nation of the Israelites. It was the record of the promises made on the part of God, and the engagements of obedience to his revealed will on the part of the people of Israel; thus it was a covenant or solemn engagement between both; and as covenants were anciently ratified by sacrifices, so here the blood of the victims was sprinkled upon the book, to denote at once that its covenanted blessings were procured by that blood of the true sacrifice of which the ancient sacrifices were the type, and as confirming the continued performance of the whole to the people upon their continued observance of the conditions. We see then the import of our Lord's words in this allusion. He calls the dispensation of his religion the NEW covenant, in opposition to this old covenant, which was in its nature introductory and temporary; and in reference also to the pre-

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

diction in Jeremiah xxxi, 31: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." This dispensation has the nature of a covenant, because it contains the "great and precious" promises on the part of God, the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of the heart in holiness, and the all-comprehensive engagement, "And I will be their God, and they shall be my people," an engagement which includes not only all blessings which "pertain to life and godliness," but, as we learn from our Lord's discourse with the Sadducees, the resurrection of the body and the felicity of an endless future life. See note on chap. xxii, 32. All this is promised by God; and on the part of man are required "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," by the merit of whose death alone we can claim these blessings, and in sole respect to which, as a satisfaction to Divine justice, God places himself in the bond of this covenant to bestow them. This covenant, the blood of Christ, that is, the pouring forth of his blood as a sacrificial victim, at once procured and ratified; so that it stands firm to all truly penitent and contrite spirits who believe in him: and of this great truth, the Lord's Supper was the instituted sign and seal; and he who in faith drinks of the cup, having reference to its signification, that blood of Christ which confirms to true believers the whole covenant of grace, is assured thereby of its faithfulness and permanence, and derives to himself the fulness of its blessings. To this there is no exception; for the new covenant, unlike the old, is universal; and hence our Lord adds to the words, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed *εκχυνομενον*, *poured out*, *περι πολλων*, for MANY," that is, for all mankind, according to the undoubted use of the word by St. Paul in Rom. v, 15, &c.,—*for*, *εις*, *in order to the remission of sins*, and of necessity all the penal consequences of human transgression in a future life.

Such then is the nature and import of this great institution. It is COMMEMORATIVE: "This do," is added by St. Luke, and by St. Paul, "in remembrance of me;" and as a commemorative institution, observed from the time of its appointment by all Christians, it is an irrefragable demonstration of the grand historical fact of our Lord's death and passion. It is EMBLEMATICAL, setting forth the sacrificial nature of the death of Christ; the benefits which accrue from it: and the means by which those benefits are received. It is FEDERAL. In its first institution the perfected covenant of grace with true believers was proposed, accepted, and ratified; and in every succeeding celebration, as there is a renewed assurance of God's love to us in Christ, so there is a renewed acceptance of the covenant on the part of all spiritual recipients, with its blessings on the one hand, and its obligations to love and obedience on the other. And, finally, it is a public CONFESSION of our faith in Christ, in all those views and relations in which he is represented to us in his own doctrine; and of our COMMUNION with him, and with his universal CHURCH. As to the names by which it is distinguished, they have all their significance. Though not properly a supper, because separate and distinct from the paschal supper, which was a sacred meal or feast, and because it was instituted after the "supper was ended," it is called THE LORD'S SUPPER, because it was manifestly appointed by our Lord to supersede the supper of the passover, and enjoined as a commemoration of a greater redemption than that of the Israelites from Egypt, upon Christians to the end of time: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come," 1 Cor. xi, 26.—It is called the EUCHARIST, from *ευχαριστειν*, "to give thanks," because of the joyful thanksgivings to God with which its celebration by the followers of Christ has always been accompanied. By the Greek fathers it is often called a MYSTERY, from its emblematical character, and the truths which lay hidden under its visible elements. In the western Church, it is more usually described as THE SACRAMENT of the Lord's Supper, from *sacramentum*, which signified a sacred ceremony; and particularly the Roman military oath, which was considered as a very solemn, religious act, this term being adopted to indicate that pledging of ourselves to fidelity to Christ which enters into the due celebration of this ordinance. Occasionally it is called THE COMMUNION, from that fellowship of the saints with each other which this participation of mystic food, at the same common table of the Lord, so beautifully exhibits.

Verse 29. *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, &c.*—The opinions of both ancient and modern commentators, on this passage, are very various. Some take the words to mean that he would not henceforth eat or drink with the disciples until after his resurrection; others, that he intended to announce the substitution of the eucharist, in which he would participate with them in a spiritual manner, for the Jewish passover; others, that he intended to intimate his speedy departure, which would prevent him from partaking in any future solemnity, until he and his disciples should

30 And when they had sung a * hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

* Or, *psalm.*

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, [k] All ye shall be offended because of me this

[k] Mark xiv, 27; John xvi, 32,

celebrate the heavenly feast together; figures from earthly entertainments being used to express the joys of heaven. In determining the sense, it is, however, necessary to ascertain the time when these words were spoken. St. Luke gives these as words of Christ, spoken during the paschal supper, after he had taken one of the cups of wine, probably the first or second cup which was used during that ceremony, and PREVIOUSLY therefore to his instituting the eucharist; and there are two reasons which make it probable that St. Luke has, in this instance, more closely followed the order of time than St. Matthew.—The first is, that the wine of which our Lord had been partaking, must have been that of the paschal supper, and not of the eucharist, because of the latter he could not be a participant. This was to be done in REMEMBRANCE of him, and therefore done by others, not by himself; or, if considered as a FEDERAL rite, he was not a PARTY to the covenant, but the Mediator coming in between the parties, and could not perform every act which was proper either to the stipulating or to the assenting party. These considerations appear conclusive against our Lord either eating of the bread or drinking of the wine of the eucharist. The second reason in favour of St. Luke's order is, that that evangelist has stated this part of the conversation of our Lord with greater particularity than St. Matthew; and as his attention was more fully directed to it, it is the more probable that he has assigned it its proper place in the narrative. His words are: "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.—And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." These words appear to be the same as those recorded by St. Matthew, though with the addition, *until that day when I shall drink it new with you*, and with the variation of, "in my Father's kingdom," for "until the kingdom of God shall come;" the sense of which is the same, and not otherwise varied than as translations into Greek by two different persons from the language in which our Saviour spoke, which was the common language of the country.—But if a similar observation was not made twice during the transactions of the evening, then the words in question are clearly, by St. Luke, referred to the celebration of the passover itself, and not to the eucharist. In this case, the meaning of our Lord's words is sufficiently obvious. The passover commemorates the redemption from Egypt; but that was a type of the Christian redemption, the completion of which is in the heavenly state. Our Lord therefore declared that he would no more eat of the passover, "until it was fulfilled," accomplished, "in the kingdom of God;" that is, the type should no more be celebrated; but he and his disciples would meet in a state of future felicity, and they with him would celebrate the full and perfected redemption of the Church glorified.—In like manner we are to understand his remark as to the wine: he would not drink of the fruit of the vine, until "the kingdom of God should come;" or as it is expressed by St. Matthew, until he drank it *new with them in the kingdom of his Father*. This is a mode of expression not uncommon among the Jews, who spoke figuratively of "the wine of the world to come," as also of "sitting down at a feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," making use of the festivals of earth to represent the felicities of heaven. It is thus that our Lord makes use of earthly things to prefigure heavenly, and raises the thoughts of his disciples to the joy of meeting him in the world to come.—In this view the words of St. Matthew have also an easy interpretation: *Until I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom*; where NEW wine is to be taken in the same sense as "new heavens," "new earth," "new man," &c, to denote wine of a different nature, spiritual refreshment, and spiritual joy, in which both the Saviour, who will then "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," and the disciples were to participate for ever.

This is one method of interpreting the text; but there is another, which, without supposing what is wholly incredible, that our Lord partook of the elements of bread and wine as instituted in his supper, will allow that both St. Luke and St. Matthew are equally exact as to the order of time in which the occurrences at the last supper are stated. The words of St. Matthew agree in sense with those of St. Luke; but, as stated above, there is an addition to them, which makes it probable that St. Luke omits what St. Matthew has recorded, and St. Matthew what is related by St. Luke. In this case we must suppose that the remark of our Lord, as stated by St. Matthew, that he would not "drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you

night; for it is written, [l] I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, [m] I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him,

[l] Zech. xiii, 7.

[m] Mark xiv, 28; xvi, 7.

in my Father's kingdom," was made not only during the paschal supper, as recorded by St. Luke, but also after he had delivered the eucharistic cup. Still, if this be allowed, all the difficulty which the common notion involves, that our Lord partook of the eucharist with his disciples, may be easily avoided. For although we should allow that he ate of the bread and drank of the wine with which he instituted the peculiar and distinct ordinance of the Lord's Supper, neither the bread nor the wine became the elements of that institution, until they had passed from him to the disciples with his own declaration of THE INTENT and significancy with which he delivered them to the disciples, and with which they were to receive them. As part of the paschal solemnities he ate the bread, and drank "the cup of blessing;" but before he distributed the bread, and "divided" the cup among his disciples, he gave them a NEW AND PECULIAR SIGNIFICANCY, under which not he himself, but his disciples only received them. Without, therefore, involving the no tion that he either ate the bread or drank the wine sacramentally, he might repeat his former observation, that he would no more drink of this fruit of the vine, until he drank it new with them in a higher and figurative manner in the kingdom of his Father; that is, that after THAT EVENING he would no more be associated with them, either in commemorating the Jewish passover, or in administering his own; but that the fruit and effect of his great redemption should be enjoyed mutually by them, when the purposes of his mediatorial office should be accomplished, and the glorious fruits of his undertaking should be enjoyed in the kingdom of "the Father," where "God shall be all in all." Of the two interpretations I have suggested, the latter is probably the most satisfactory.

This fruit of the vine.—Γεννημα τουαμπελον is a periphrasis for wine, and is the mode of expression used in the form of giving thanks upon taking the passover cup; for then the master of the house said, "Blessed be he that created *the fruit of the vine.*"

Verse 30. *Sang a hymn.*—The paschal psalms were from the hundred and thirteenth to the hundred and eighteenth inclusive, and were called the great Hallel; of which the Jews themselves remark, that they allude to the sorrows of the Messiah, and the resurrection from the dead. This Hallel, or song of praise, was not sung all at once, but in parts, the last of which was sung at the close of the passover.

Verse 31. *Then saith Jesus unto them, &c.*—The time was probably as they were proceeding to the mount of Olives. The term *offended* here, as in several other places, signifies, to be so discouraged and affrighted by the sufferings to which men would be exposed for Christ's sake, as to forsake him, as men do a rough and dangerous path. When they saw their Master arrested, they feared the consequences as to themselves, and for the time forsook him.

For it is written, I will smite, &c.—Although this quotation is not introduced with the more lengthened formula, "that it might or may be fulfilled," the particle γαρ sufficiently shows that our Lord represented the scattering of his disciples, like a flock of timid sheep, to be the proper accomplishment of the prophecy to which he refers, and not, as so many understand it, as warranting the application of an apt proverbial expression. The passage referred to, and in fact quoted, is Zech. xiii, 7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The section of prophecy in which this passage stands has a reference both to nearer and more distant, and manifestly evangelical, events; and, like all other prophecies of this class, it contains passages, the peculiar phrase of which shows that they can only be applied to our Lord himself. In the former part of the text quoted by our Lord, he against whom the sword of God is summoned to awake, is called *my shepherd;* which indeed might apply to any ruler raised up by him to rule his people the Jews; but when this shepherd is called "THE FELLOW" of the Lord of hosts, no one can be intended but Him who was "equal" with God, and yet by becoming man, and a substitute for guilty men, he voluntarily exposed himself to the sword of the rectoral justice of God, to make atonement for the sins of the world. With the smiting of the shepherd, the prophet connects the scattering of the sheep; and the event both in time and manner signally answers to the prophecy: when our Lord was apprehended, all the disciples "forsook him and fled." But why, it may be asked, should this apparently minor circumstance have been noticed, since no great blame appears to have been attached to them simply for this act, and had they remained with Christ they could have afforded him no assistance, nor indeed did he need any power save his own, had he chosen to exert it? The reason probably was, not only to record an instructive incident, but to direct attention to the whole

Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, [n] Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 ¶ [o] Then cometh Jesus with them

[n] St. John xiii, 38.

[o] Mark xiv, 32; Luke xxii, 39.

of an illustrious prophecy, which not only predicts the sufferings of Messiah, and the desertion of his immediate followers, but inscribes in the strongest character the doctrine of his Divinity,—THE MAN, THE FELLOW OF JEHOVAH, and by consequence the vicarious nature of his sufferings; for to such a being suffering must have been voluntary, and endured for others; and though inflicted by men in the exercise of their free agency, yet thereby accomplishing the counsel of God: the sword was the Lord's; the hand that wielded it, as far as the sufferings were external, the hand of man.

Verse 32. *But after I am risen again, &c.*—So plainly did our Lord speak of his resurrection; and yet so little did they comprehend his meaning, as to be quite unprepared for that event when it actually occurred. Either through the agitation of their minds at this season, they paid little attention to these words, or they understood him as speaking figuratively of delivering himself out of the hands of his enemies. *I will go before you into Galilee;* where he chose to give them the most signal proofs of the truth of his resurrection, as he had made that country the scene of his most constant labours. It is unnecessary to lay any stress upon προαξω υμας, *I will go before you*, as though the pastoral metaphor in the preceding verse were here continued. The words appear to mean simply, "I will PRECEDE you again into Galilee, and meet you there."

Verse 33. *Peter answered and said, &c.*—He said this in great sincerity: the genuineness of Peter's attachment to his Master, and the fulness of his conviction that he was the true Messiah, were equally undoubted. But he knew not himself fully, nor the power of strong temptation upon over confident and unwatchful minds. Judas's sin was deliberate, Peter's a sin of surprise; Judas's the result of an habitual state of heart, Peter's was an act contrary to his habitual feelings and principles. Judas's fall produced nothing upon reflection but despair and horror, all gracious feelings having been extinguished by avarice; but Peter's fall awoke the sorrows of a generous and affectionate nature, which, but in this sad instance of the effect of sudden fear, had never wavered in its clear and simple devotedness to his beloved Master. No characters could be more unlike; as contrary to each other, indeed, as their respective ends.

Verses 34, 35. *Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice, &c.*—St. Mark says, "before the cock crow twice;" St. Luke and St. John, "the cock shall not crow," &c. Cockcrowing was used to express two periods, midnight and the third watch, or about three in the morning; and the second being more noticeable than the first, was often so called by way of eminence, and is usually the time meant by αλεκτοροφονια, or cockcrowing. St. Mark refers to this as the second crowing of the cock, and therefore says, "Before the cock crow TWICE." The other evangelists, referring only to that which was popularly observed and spoken of as the cockcrowing, take no notice of the former period, and speak as if the latter were the only time of cockcrow; and thus the apparent discrepancy is reconciled. The Talmud says that "cocks were not kept in Jerusalem, because of the holy things." But if this be not a superstitious invention of later times, and the Jews in our Lord's time were equally averse to keeping this species of fowl within the walls, there was a sufficient number of Romans and other Gentiles resident there who had no such scruple; and the learned labours of Reland and Schoettgen, to prove that a cock might crow outside the walls, and yet be heard by Peter, might have been spared. How accurately were these words of our Saviour accomplished! After Peter's third denial, "the cock crew the second time." Then, indeed, Peter remembered the words of the Lord, which unhappily, for the time, made no impression upon him, though so solemnly delivered. So resolutely proof against the cautions of wisdom is the self-confiding spirit. Peter, instead of being warned, reiterates his professions, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;* and whereas before he spoke in his own name, now he speaks as the mouth of the rest,—*likewise also said all the disciples*, who yet were stricken with the same cowardice, though they did not so formally, and with imprecations like him, deny their Lord.

Verse 36. *A place called Gethsemane.*—Some take this to have been the name of a village at the foot of the mount of Olives; and so χωριον is rendered in the Ethiopic, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions: but if Gethsemane were a village, the particular place into which our Lord entered was a GARDEN belonging to it; for so it is described by St. John. As no gardens were allowed within the walls of Jerusalem, they abounded in the suburbs. Gethsemane signifies the place of oil presses, and was probably so

unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

called from the presses there used to obtain the oil from the olives, which give its name to this celebrated mountain and district. In one part of this secluded garden he commanded all the disciples to sit down, while he went to pray at a distance, no doubt in some part of the garden still more retired, and less liable to intrusion. It was a place, however, known to Judas; for, as we learn from St. John, "Jesus oft resorted thither with his disciples," no doubt for confidential instruction, and devotional exercises. Whole nights, as we gather from different parts of the history, had been spent there by our Lord; but no such night as that which now overshadowed him.

Verse 37. *Began to be sorrowful and very heavy, &c.*—In this deeply solemn and affecting account of our blessed Lord's agony, several particulars call for our attention, on which all may profitably meditate, without, as too many have done, pressing too boldly upon this mysterious scene. For it is not without instructive meaning to us, that the body of the disciples were kept at a distance, and even the favoured three who accompanied our Lord were oppressed with sleep, and witnessed not all the particulars which were afterward very generally and briefly revealed, in order to their being recorded. Imagination may indeed be busy here; but imagination must be reined in by humility and sobriety, for we are at a distance while our Lord prays and agonizes "yonder;" and as a veil is thrown over all but the prominent passages of this wondrous scene, human imagination has no light to dispel the darkness, and probably always perverts where she pretends to discover. We may, however, notice, 1. The terms employed to express our Lord's mental sufferings, which have been so justly called his agony. He began to be *sorrowful, and very heavy*, λυπεισθαι και αδημονειν, *to be pierced with sorrow and filled with anguish.* St. Mark uses another term, *amazed*, εκθαμβεισθαι, to be so overwhelmed with anguish as to absorb the faculties, or, to use the expressive phrase of the Old Testament, *to drink up the spirit.* In the next verse our Lord uses the term περιλυπος, where the intensive force of the preposition is well expressed by our translators by *exceeding sorrowful*; and yet it is added, in awful accumulation of the emphasis, εως θανατου, *even unto death*, expressive of an overwhelming anguish, threatening the instant and violent extinction of life itself. 2. The circumstance added by St. Luke, still more strongly than the language employed, powerfully emphatic as it is, marks the intenseness of Christ's inward struggle. In the human nature he derived strength from the ministry of an angel; and then, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly," as though the strength thus imparted was but renewed strength to suffer, and "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Even if we adopt the opinion, that a mere comparison of the profuse and heavy sweat to clots of blood was intended, this itself, considering that there was no bodily exertion to produce it, and that the time was night, when the heat of the day had passed, could not have been produced but by the strongest conflict and commotion of spirit. But unless more was intended, it is difficult to conceive why clotted blood should have been fixed upon as an illustration of the rolling down of great drops of sweat. It is certainly unusual, and to any one who attempts to compare the one with the other, will appear inapt. It is not, however, necessary to suppose that this sweat was altogether a profusion of blood, which is the error some have fallen into on the other side. And though some heathen writers have been quoted by the critics who mention bloody sweats, and a modern instance or two of this, as the effect of the strong emotion of fear, has been given, all that can fairly be understood by these accounts is, that by a rupture of some of the finer blood vessels in some parts of the body, the sweat became tinged, and, to a certain extent, bloody. This is probably what Galen means in the passage quoted by Dr. Mead: "*Contingere interdum, poros ex multo aut fervido spiritu usque adeo dilatari, ut etiam exeat sanguis per eos*, FIATQUE SUDOR SANGUINEUS." Thuanus, too, in his History, having mentioned an Italian gentleman thrown into great horror of a public execution, says, "*Observatum, tam indignæ mortis vehementi metu adeo concussum animo eum fuisse, ut* SANGUINEUM SUDOREM *toto corpore fundaret.*" But whatever may be thought of these extraordinary cases, in the instance of our Lord, the most natural inference from the words of the evangelist is, that his profuse and heavy perspiration was thus tinged with blood which had burst from the smaller vessels, so that "his sweat was ωσει, *like* great drops of blood falling down to the ground." So that not only was the perspiration, but blood also, forced out by the conflict within. 3. The weight of that load of sorrow, laid upon our Lord in his agony, is farther indicated to us from the circumstance of his praying so earnestly that, if it were possible, that cup might pass from him. Grotius and others, who take the CUP to be a figurative expression for

death, understand our Lord as praying, if it were possible, to be excused from going through his undertaking, and suffering the penalty of death. This notion, however, contradicts the whole character of Christ, who not only knew that it was not *possible* for the world to be redeemed in any other way than by his dying for its sin, but throughout exhibited a calm and unmoved courage in anticipation of that event, which came not upon him unexpectedly, but was ever present to his mind, as appears from the many declarations respecting it which he had made during his ministry. In the language of the Old Testament, the portion of men, both of good and evil, is called their cup; and the administration of the Divine judgments is frequently expressed under the same figure. Hence we read, "the cup of trembling," "the cup of the Lord's fury;" and a mixed or empoisoned cup is represented as in the Lord's hand, which his enemies should be obliged to drink. The cup here spoken of by our Lord was his present bitter anguish and unspeakable sufferings. This is plain from comparing the accounts of the evangelists. St. Matthew says, THIS *cup*, that which he was then drinking; nor does he pray that the cup of death might not be administered; but, *Let this cup*, then put into his hands, *pass*, παρελθετω, from me. St. Mark expresses the same thing without a figure: "he prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him," clearly meaning that the duration of his sufferings might be shortened. And St. Luke, still uttering precisely the same idea in somewhat varied phrase, states the prayer of Jesus to be, "If thou be willing, REMOVE this cup from me." Mightily as he had been strengthened to suffer, he was sinking under a deadly anguish, and prayed that, "if it were possible," if it were consistent with the Divine purpose, if it could be done without impairing the efficacy of his atonement and vicarious undertaking, that bitter cup, that cup of trembling and horror, might pass away from him; yet with entire submission, leaving it to his Father to judge of the fitness of the request, and the measure of suffering which his justice was to exact from one who was now in the room and place of a guilty world, bearing their transgressions; and who, by that substitution of himself in their place, had given up all right to decide this question for himself. And it was *possible*, not for the cup to be withheld from him, but for that cup, after he had drunk so largely of its bitterness, *to pass away* from him. This we know from the fact: he was relieved from his agony, and rejoined his disciples in a state of composure which itself, from its suddenness, indicated a supernatural interposition: and we know it also from the words of St. Paul, "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared," Heb. v, 7.

Such are the declarations and circumstances which mark the PECULIAR and UNPARALLELED mental sufferings of our Lord in his agony. On the *causes* of those sufferings many superficial and even misleading conjectures have been offered by commentators both ancient and modern, often influenced by false or by imperfect views of the true nature of the passion and death of Christ. His sorrows on this occasion have been referred to a natural horror of death; to the sense he had of the ingratitude of the Jews; to his foresight of the ignominy with which he was about to be treated; to his sympathy with his country, whose terrible calamities he had foretold; to a sense of the evil of sin, to a conflict with the powers of darkness, and other causes equally inadequate to account for the fact; for mysterious as it is, it is plain that the true cause lay deeper than any of these, or all of them collectively, although they might contribute somewhat to increase the pressure of the load. The true key to the case is in the fact that this sorrow and anguish of our Lord was purely MENTAL, except as his body might be consequentially affected by them: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," &c. That he did not inflict them upon himself is certain; that he was not yet delivered into the hands of men to injure him is equally certain; and the conclusion must therefore inevitably be, that they were inflicted by his heavenly Father. Now of this agency of God in the passion of Christ, as well as the subsequent agency of men, both types and prophecies are full; and of the latter none need be referred to in proof but the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, where it is not only said that "he was despised and rejected of MEN;" but that "it pleased THE LORD to bruise him; HE hath put him to grief." Now though it be granted that sometimes the Lord is said to do what he permits to be done by others, this can scarcely apply to a prophecy where the different agents are kept so distinct; and the fact that Christ did endure an agony of suffering quite independent of men, and which in the history itself is expressly referred to the agency of God, as the cup given him by his Father to drink, and which his Father only could make to pass from him, confirms this as the sense of the prophecy. Now, whether we can understand in any degree or not, how the Father "BRUISED him" and "put him to GRIEF;" that he did so is both the subject of the prophecy and the declaration of the history. We cannot indeed comprehend what was meant by the Father forsaking him upon the cross; but we see there a poignant suffering as the result of this, quite distinct from his bodily

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

tortures. In like manner we are unable to form any adequate conception of the manner in which the sufferings in the garden were inflicted upon the "soul" of Christ; yet they resulted either from denying to the human soul of Christ that which had upheld and felicitated it, or the production of a positive misery by supernatural intercourse and influence. In one word, he had put himself in the place of sinners; and as to the penalty of sin, though not as to aversion to his person, he was treated for the time as a sinner. In their penal consequence our sins were laid upon him: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," the griefs and sorrows which we must otherwise have borne and carried ourselves: and as the penalty of sin is not only inflicted upon the body but upon the soul; as that is made to feel an insupportable load of anguish when God arises to judgment, and is overwhelmed with fear, because of the terrors of the Lord; so our Lord drank of this cup of the most poignant bitterness, and took it out of the hands of offended justice, that it might never be placed in ours. That, according to the theory of some, he endured the same measure of punishment in a *degree* equal to that which would have been extended through all eternity to the elect had they been lost, is not only an unnecessary hypothesis, because it affords no explication of the doctrine of the atonement, but is obviously impossible. The merit of the sufferings of Christ is not to be estimated by the *quantum* endured, but by the dignity and glory of the sufferer; and yet there was to be suffering, so severe, so marked, in words so unutterable, that, in this method of accepting an atonement for human transgression, there should be an awful DEMONSTRATION of the rectoral justice of God, his infinite hatred of sin, and his respect for the honour and authority of his laws. Here our Saviour was made not only to bear the burden of our offences in their penal results, but to faint and sink under it, so as to need a special interposition on the part of God to relieve him for a time from it, that he might fulfil the measure hereafter, and pay "the rigid satisfaction, death for death." Nor is it any objection to this view that our Lord never ceased to be the beloved of the Father. *Personally*, he always remained the beloved Son; so, and the more so, because of this very act of substituting himself in the place of the guilty, from his infinite love to us: but as *taking our place*, and offering in his own person the redemption price, he was treated accordingly; "it was exacted, and he was made answerable;" and this good pleasure of the Father remained perfectly consonant with his severity. So these two ideas, irreconcilable to some, are exhibited in union by Isaiah: "YET IT PLEASED the Lord to bruise HIM;" that is, notwithstanding the perfect excellence and moral loveliness of his character, as stated in the preceding verses. On this subject it may finally be added that Christ's agony can no otherwise be accounted for than on the principle that he not only suffered for our benefit, but vicariously in our room and stead. The derogating doctrine of those who deny his Divinity and atonement can furnish no explication of the fact which does not detract from that character of the highest virtue which they are nevertheless anxious to ascribe to him. Were he only a great and virtuous man, how, upon the supposition that his agony was occasioned by the fear of death, can we account for his approaching death with less courage not only than many of his persecuted followers, who endured it in forms as terrible, as far as corporal tortures go; but also than many heathens? how was it that, unlike other excellent men under persecution, he brought no comfort to his spirit from reflecting upon his integrity and uprightness? and how that prayer to him was not the instrument of a cheerful sustaining intercourse with his heavenly Father; but in the garden an earnest passionate pleading for mere mitigation of suffering, and upon the cross a vehement complaint that God had forsaken him! The Christian doctrine, that he died the just for the unjust to bring us to God, explains all these otherwise inscrutable particulars, and shows that they all stand in exact harmony with the purpose of God, and his own voluntary surrender to be a sacrifice for the sins of others; but, upon any other theory, they remain without a reason, and draw a veil over the character of Christ in his last passion which nothing can withdraw.

Verse 38. *And watch with me.*—In the duty of watching he included prayer, as appears from verse 41. If prayer was necessary to the Master, much more to the disciples, who were to have their hour of temptation and danger.

Verse 39. *And he went a little farther.*—Leaving them behind to engage in the devotions proper to their condition. St. Luke marks the distance: "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast."

And fell on his face.—The humblest and most earnest posture of supplication; and an action probably produced by the oppressive load upon his spirit, which prostrated him to the earth.

If it be possible, &c.—See the note on verse 37. In the parallel passage of St.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at

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Mark we read, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee;" but in this there is nothing inconsistent: God is the object of prayer, because all things are possible to him, as the schoolmen say, *per se*; but we are taught to put this limitation upon our prayers, and to add, *if it be possible*, that is, not inconsistent with the Divine wisdom or other attributes of his nature, or purposes of his holy and perfect will. We may therefore consistently say that things may be at once possible with God and impossible; possible, *physically*, because he can do all things; impossible, *morally*, because he cannot do that which is not wise and right. Of the latter possibility, in many cases, we are imperfect judges, and must therefore pray conditionally. With our Lord the case was, in this respect, different: he indeed knew all things, yet now being in the place of the sinner, he would not be the judge in his own cause, (see the note just referred to,) but honoured the justice of the Father by leaving it to that strict attribute to exact all that was necessary for the manifestation of its own purity, while at the same time he appealed to the Divine compassion. He therefore adds, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;" yielding himself with absolute submission to the Divine appointment, and affording us in a state of suffering, as in all other circumstances, a perfect example, that we, in our measure, and by the aids of his powerful grace, should "tread in his steps."

Verses 40, 41. *And saith unto Peter, &c.*—Peter is here singled out from the others, and specially cautioned, as having been foremost to profess his zeal, and about to be specially proved by the temptation which awaited him. When our Lord says, *Watch and pray that ye enter not*, μη εισελθητε, *into temptation*, he means not that they might be preserved from circumstances of trial and danger, but that they might not fall under their power. So St. Paul uses the phrase, "fall into temptation," 1 Tim. vi, 9, for being overcome by it. When our Lord adds, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, he has been generally thought to make a kind apology for the drowsiness of his disciples; but the remark has by some been considered as a motive to the duty, implying that a willing spirit ought to remember the clogs and hinderances which the frailty of flesh hangs upon it, and exert itself the more vigorously to prevent its being brought into bondage to its influence. When, however, it is recollected, as stated by St. Luke, that their great drowsiness was heightened by their sympathizing emotions occasioned by their Master's distress,—for he says, "he found them sleeping for sorrow,"—the former interpretation is to be preferred. They knew not the full extent of his griefs: he separated himself from them, but they could not be unobservant of his trouble; and he might not be so far distant, but that in the stillness of the night they might hear his "strong crying," and when he returned to them after each part of the mighty conflict, might observe his "tears." They at least so far knew the moving and mysterious case, as to partake so deeply of his sorrows, that their animal spirits were exhausted, through the mixed and painful emotions which oppressed them; and they were thus the more readily overpowered with sleep. All this he knew; and a kind excuse seemed to be called for, by a fault into which they were in part led by the strength of their affection for their Master.

Verse 44. *And prayed the third time, using the same words.*—The petition in each case was the same, and the expressions of meek resignation with which it was accompanied. But at each time it would seem that the intensity of his feelings was heightened, and his sorrows became more pressing; for after one of these acts of supplication, "there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him," lest he should wholly sink under his sufferings; and thus strengthened, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly." See the note on verse 37.

Verse 45. *Sleep on now, and take your rest.*—Because our Lord almost immediately adds, *Rise, let us be going*, these words have been taken interrogatively; but the import is, "I no longer enjoin it upon you to watch; the season is now past for this duty, and the time of trial, for which watchfulness and prayer

hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 ¶ [p] And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand,

[p] Mark xiv, 43; Luke xxii, 47; John xviii, 3.

would have better prepared you, has arrived." *Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* By *sinners*, αμαρτωλοι, it has been argued that the Romans must be understood, because all heathens were so specially denominated by the Jews; but it is not probable that our Lord would, on an occasion which particularly marked the extreme wickedness of the leading Jews, countenance that proud and exclusive language which implied that *they* were not "sinners of the Gentiles." The weight of criminality in the most unjust and cruel conduct experienced by our Lord rested upon them; and this strong term was therefore their fitting designation.

Verse 46. *Rise, let us be going.*—These words do not indicate any intention of escape. Our Lord wished to rejoin his disciples in the less retired part of the garden, and to meet those whom Judas was leading to this his well known retreat, in order to apprehend him according to his infamous contract.

Verse 47. *A great multitude.*—These were composed of a "band," and "officers from the chief priests and Pharisees," John xviii, 3. The force employed indicated their fears that a rescue might be attempted, should they meet with any considerable body of those who had so lately welcomed him as the King Messiah into Jerusalem.

Swords and staves.—Both the swords and staves, or clubs, appear to have been borne by this "multitude," composed of the "officers" of the Jewish magistrates and those who followed them promiscuously. For though St. John uses the term "band," σπειρα, which was one of the divisions of the Roman legion, less than a cohort, it is probably used in a vague sense, for any body of men employed by authority to apprehend a prisoner. As yet we have no clear indication of the presence of the Roman soldiery.

Verse 48. *Gave them a sign.*—This was agreed upon with them by the traitor, that they might not mistake another person for Jesus, the time being night, and, though moonlight, the place shaded with trees.

Verse 49. *And kissed him.*—A customary mode of salutation among the Jews at departing or meeting again, and used also as an expression of reverence to a superior.

Verse 50. *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*—Εταιρε was an ordinary but general form of address, marking somewhat of courteous distance and strangeness. The interrogation may be considered either as a calm inquiry as to the purpose of Judas, or as conveying in the mildest words the most poignant reproof: *εφ' ω, against whom art thou come?* Against him whom thou hast acknowledged as thy Master and Lord, followed as his disciple, receiving the benefit of his instructions, and by whom thou hast been placed among the number of his friends, and raised to the rank of an apostle; art THOU come against HIM? Several MSS. read *εφ' ο*; which rendering is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and others. The authorities for each reading are, however, nearly balanced.

Verse 51. *One of them which were with Jesus, &c.*—This, as we learn from St. John, was Peter; always forward and impetuous until experience and the richer supplies of grace new moulded and renewed his spirit. He not improbably thought of setting an example of courageous resistance to the other disciples, having faith in his Master's power to enable to conquer many by a few, as in the instances of the Old Testament. But this act of mistaken zeal, and of faith exercised without authority or warrant, gave occasion for a new display of the mild and merciful character of our Lord, and for teaching several important lessons. He healed the wound inflicted upon the servant of the high priest, probably by reuniting the parts, and taught that his cause was not to be maintained by a warfare of carnal weapons; *for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* Some refer this to the Jews, as though the reason given to Peter to sheathe his sword was, that God himself would take vengeance upon Christ's enemies in due time, so that those who employed the sword against him should perish by the sword of the Romans. But this interpretation does not well cohere with the occasion; and the words more naturally refer to Peter, who was reproved for using force, by the general principle laid down, that all who took the sword,

and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: [q] for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, [r] that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done that the [s] Scriptures of the prophets might be ful-

[q] Gen. ix, 6; Rev. xiii, 10.

[r] Isaiah liii, 10.—[s] Lam. iv, 20.

meaning as he took it, should perish by it. These words were not designed to prohibit the use of the sword on every occasion; or why should our Lord have permitted his disciples to wear swords or hangers as Peter did, according to the custom of the Jews on travel, to defend themselves against robbers? So also the magistrate, when he "beareth not the sword in vain" fulfils his duty; and it would be difficult to prove from the New Testament, that strictly defensive national wars are unlawful. But our Lord manifestly designed to teach that injuries for the sake of RELIGION are not to be repelled by retaliative violence, but submitted to with patience; and that his cause was not to be maintained or promoted by the strifes of an earthly warfare, or by civil coercion: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight;" words which show that such as is the nature of the kingdom are the means by which it is appropriately upheld and maintained. In both these views the lesson was most important: 1. To the disciples so long as Christianity should be under persecution. In no instance were they to resist or "return evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing;" after the example of him who healed the wound of Malchus, although one of those who had "come out against him." By the opposite conduct they would take their cause out of the hand of God, and yet would not escape danger; there was *a sword* still to which they would be exposed; after the sword of man, certainly the sword of God. "He that saveth his life," by such or any other unlawful means, "shall lose it." 2. The lesson was equally important to the Church, and no doubt looked onward to the time when Christianity should become powerful and triumphant. He who foresaw all things knew that the time would come when his servants would fight for his kingdom as though it were a civil, not a spiritual institution, and when compulsion and persecution would be the instruments to which they would resort under pretence of repelling Christ's enemies, or increasing the number of his adherents. The doom of persecuting Churches and persecutors is here, therefore, forewritten by him who, from the first, disclaimed such officious disciples, even when so far sincere as to believe they were "doing God service." "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword;" by the awakened vengeance, often of injured communities debarred of the rights of conscience, or the slower but still certain vengeance of Him who especially abhors all zeal which is not animated by the mild flame of charity.

Verse 53. *Twelve legions of angels.*—Peter's distrust in the wisdom and care of God is here reproved. "Is my Father less concerned for my safety than thou? And were it necessary, would he not in answer to my prayer, even now, *apti*, in this very juncture, surround me not with a few weak disciples, but with *twelve legions of angels?*" The Roman legion, to which the allusion probably is, was composed, at this period, of six thousand men.

Verse 54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? &c.*—Peter's ignorance of the Scriptures is also reproved; the predictions and types of which most unequivocally declare that "the Messiah should be cut off," and that even by the instrumentality of unjust men, he should "pour out his soul unto death, and make intercession for the transgressors." But by thus referring to the declarations of the prophets, our Lord not only reproved Peter, but placed a support beneath the faith of his disciples, which might otherwise have been fatally shaken by the occurrences which followed, to them so mysterious and unexpected.

Verse 55. *As against a thief, &c.*—This is a trait of dignity. While he submitted to it, he spurned the degradation of the manner of his apprehension, hunted out by night with torches and lanterns as a *thief* who was hiding himself from justice, and dared not appear by day. He reminds them, therefore, that he had appeared among them openly, daily teaching in the temple, his whole conduct and doctrine being made manifest to all, when he might have been apprehended had any just charge been laid against him. Thus were their treachery and cowardice reproved.

Verse 56. *But this was done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.*—This is not a

filled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 ¶ [r] And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses.

[r] Mark xiv, 53; Luke xxii, 54; John xviii, 13.

remark of the evangelist thrown into the account, as the division of the verses would intimate, but the continuance of the address of Christ to those who came to apprehend him; not indeed designed for their instruction, but for ours. Those scriptures were fulfilled by the circumstances of our Lord's apprehension, which foretold the treachery of Judas, the leader of the band, and by all those also which refer to his humiliation in being accounted and treated as the lowest criminals. Thus, as to Judas, Psalm xli, 9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." And, with reference to his being treated as a transgressor, and as a *thief*, Isaiah's words, he was "numbered with the transgressors," may apply both to his apprehension in the manner of criminals of this class, and his being placed between two of them on the cross; although, doubtless, it has also a more extended meaning. The desertion of the disciples, immediately added, fulfilled another scripture before quoted from Zechariah.—The shepherd being smitten, the sheep were then scattered.

Verse 57. *To Caiaphas the high priest.*—He was led first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas; but as nothing of importance took place there, this circumstance is omitted by all the evangelists except John. Why he was first taken to Annas, who had been deposed from the high priest's office by the Romans, does not appear. He, however, sent him bound to Caiaphas, in whose palace the great council had assembled to determine his case.

Verse 58. *Peter followed him afar off.*—Between the period of Christ's being taken to Annas, and thence to Caiaphas, Peter, and also John, appear to have recovered their fright, and to have followed their Master to his place of trial; but Peter afar off, as fearful of being discovered; and it was probably this parleying with his fears which increased them, and led to those shameful acts which followed.

The high priest's palace.—The word αὐλὴ properly signifies an open court, but sometimes is used for the building also to which it is attached. Here it seems to signify the interior court in the middle of a large oriental house, which was generally in the form of a square, enclosing this area. The court itself was open at the top.

Verse 59. *Sought false witnesses.*—They sought them among the by-standers, probably offering bribes by their officers, or inviting those who were zealous for their law to come forward to secure the condemnation of so great a reputed subverter of it. False prophets, seducers of the people to idolatry, and blasphemers were to be put to death; and the object was, to obtain witnesses to prove either that he was a false prophet or a blasphemer; but as the law required that, in capital cases, two or three witnesses should agree in their testimony, and it was necessary also to lay something like consistent and plausible evidence before the Roman governor, in order to secure his confirmation of their sentence, they kept up some appearance of regard at least to their forms of justice. These, however, appear, from Maimonides, to have been extremely lax in the cases of persons charged with the spiritual offences above mentioned. "The judgment of a deceiver is not as the rest of capital punishments: his witnesses are hid, and he has no premonition or warning as the rest of those that are put to death; and if he goes out of the sanhedrim acquitted, and one says, I can prove the charge against him, they turn him back; but if he goes out condemned, and one says, I can prove him innocent, they do not put him again on his trial." Of these loose notions in the administration of justice, on such occasions, the Jewish council appear in the case of our Lord to have largely availed themselves, to proceed against him in the most unjust and malignant manner.

Verse 60. *They found none.*—They found many willing, but none who said what was to their purpose; many ready to pervert some acts or words of our Lord to support a criminal charge, but all so vague or incredible, that even they could not receive their testimony; and thus his real innocence was made the more apparent from the encouragement held out to present charges against him.

At the last came two false witnesses, &c.—Two who seemed to be agreed to depose that he had said, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.* To speak against the temple was deemed a capi-

61 And said, This *fellow* said, [u] I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

53 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, [v] Hereafter shall ye see the Son

[u] John ii, 19.

[v] Matt. xvi, 27; 1 Thess. iv, 16; Rom. xiv, 9.

tal offence. For prophesying against the city and temple Jeremiah was said to be worthy of death by the priests and prophets of his day, Jer. xxvi, 11, 12. And it was one of the capital charges laid by the false witnesses against Stephen, that he had spoken "blasphemous words against this holy place." "Yet," adds St. Mark, "their witness did not agree together." It was a perversion of his words, "Destroy this temple," meaning the temple of his body, "and in three days will I raise it up;" their version of which was, I WILL destroy, or, as St. Mark has it, I am ABLE to destroy, the temple of God; two different propositions, which point out the discrepancy of those two witnesses, if we suppose St. Matthew to give the words of one, and St. Mark those of the other. Even had the words been as they stated, yet, as the declaration as to the destruction of the temple was accompanied with the promise to build it up again in three days, the words could not fairly be construed into speaking AGAINST, or blaspheming the temple because of the promise of its restoration. All this, however, availed nothing; and, his condemnation being resolved upon, the high priest assumes that the witnesses had deposed a consistent capital charge; and, seeing no eagerness in our Lord to reply, *he arose*, as if for the purpose of intimidation, and in order to draw from Christ something which, by his own perverse handling, might corroborate the accusation, and demands, *Answerest thou nothing to what these witness against thee?*

Verse 63. *But Jesus held his peace, &c.*—The silence of our Lord has been often accounted for by interpreters, from his perceiving that this unjust tribunal was determined upon his destruction; but that would have been a reason for his preserving the same silence throughout the trial. His silence had a deeper meaning: he knew that the wisdom of God had appointed that he should be found guilty upon a charge which was in fact the great truth by which he was glorified, namely, that he professed to be the Son of God; and his silence wholly baffled the intention of the high priest, who evidently was not quite bold enough to pronounce sentence upon so vague a charge without fortifying it by what he might draw forth from our Lord himself. To that charge therefore our Lord answered nothing; and the high priest wholly quits it in order to question him upon a higher and graver matter, as to whether, as had been commonly reported, he had professed to be, not merely the Messiah, but *the Christ, the Son of God.* No one appears to have been present who had heard our Lord make this profession, although he had done it on a few occasions publicly; and this gives the reason why the high priest, who knew how certainly this would decide the case against him with the sanhedrim, laid him under so solemn an adjuration, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* This was a Jewish mode of placing a witness under oath; and after such a sanction, when adjured by a magistrate, the answer of the witness was, as we should express it, upon oath. By some it is affirmed that an accused person so adjured, was obliged to answer; but this does not certainly appear from any authority adduced. Silence would, however, after so solemn a form, tend greatly to increase suspicion against him. Our Lord, however, hesitated not, but answered under the oath laid upon him: a sufficient proof that his own command in the sermon on the mount, *Swear not at all*, did not relate to judicial oaths; for he himself submitted in this respect to the practice of the Jewish courts.

Verse 64. *Thou hast said.*—This is a Hebrew form of assent or affirmation, equivalent to, "It is truly so as thou hast said;" I am the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Nevertheless I say unto you.—Πλην ought here, as the connection shows, to be rendered not *nevertheless*, but *moreover*; for Christ in *addition* to this confession uttered a solemn prediction of his coming in glory to judge the world.

The right hand of power.—That is, the right hand of God; for in the language of the Jews God is sometimes called POWER. St. Luke has "the power of God." The meaning is, at the right hand of the powerful or almighty God.

The clouds of heaven.—This phrase not only marks the majesty and glory of Christ's advent, making as it were "the clouds his chariot, and riding upon the wings of the wind;" but shows that he referred to the celebrated prophecy in Dan. vii, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like unto

of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what farther need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

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the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," &c. This prophecy our Lord applied to himself, and declared that as THE SON OF MAN, as well as THE SON OF GOD, having received this universal kingdom, they who now sat as his judges should see him invested with its glories, and armed with its sovereign authority; and that thus his claims both as the CHRIST, and THE SON OF GOD, should be established, to the confusion and punishment of those that rejected him.

Verse 65. *Rent his clothes.*—The high priest was forbidden by the law to rend his garments; but this appears to be intended only of funeral occasions. Upon the hearing of blasphemy the Jewish canons of more modern times obliged every Israelite to rend his clothes, as a token of indignation, astonishment, and grief; and the judges of a court, upon a trial for blasphemy, were enjoined, upon hearing the words of the blasphemy, as repeated by the witnesses, to stand up and rend their garments. In this, therefore, Caiaphas probably followed the custom of his age, or else, by this affectation of peculiar and passionate indignation, gave rise to it in future times. The dress of the high priest out of the temple was not different from that of other Jews, so that the proper pontifical garments were not on this occasion rent.

Blasphemy.—That species of blasphemy which consisted, not in denying God's attributes, or using reproachful and irreverent language against him, but in attributing to himself, deemed by them a mere man, the majesty and glory peculiar to God.

Verse 66. *He is guilty of death.*—He is ενοχος, obnoxious, liable to death; that is, he deserves to die. This is to be considered as the sentence of the council, to whom, as the president, the high priest put the case; artfully, however, endeavouring to influence their suffrages, by assuming that he had spoken blasphemy, and that there was now no need of witnesses. In all civil cases the power of life and death had been taken away from the Jewish courts by the Romans; but in matters of their religion they had still the power to inflict capital punishments, yet the sentence of the sanhedrim was to be confirmed by the Roman governor before it could be executed. The proper punishment of a blasphemer by their law was stoning; but they were anxious to have our Lord crucified, which was a Roman punishment: they therefore not only sought from Pilate a confirmation of their sentence; but set themselves to induce Pilate to treat him also as an enemy to Cesar, and a seditious opposer of the Roman government, in order that the Roman soldiery might have the charge of his execution. Their motive probably was the fear lest the populace, who favoured him, should, upon seeing him led out to be stoned, accompanied only by a civil force, attempt to rescue him; which they dared not attempt when the Roman garrison was under arms to carry his crucifixion into effect. But in this the overruling providence of God was manifest; for he was to endure the most shameful and torturing death, and to fulfil the words of Scripture, "Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree."

Two questions may now be briefly considered: What was the alleged blasphemy for which our Lord was condemned? and in what did the guilt of his judges consist? As to the first, nothing can be more plain than that he could not be condemned simply for professing to be the Messiah, against which there was no law; and it would have been most absurd for a people who were anxiously waiting from age to age for the appearance of Messiah, to have made it capital for any one to profess himself to be the Messiah. Nor was he condemned because, professing to be the Messiah, he failed to prove himself so, and was therefore "a deceiver;" for no proof was demanded, no trial of his claim established; but from his own simple confession of what he was, not even with reference to the deposition of the two witnesses respecting his threatening to destroy the temple, he was adjudged "guilty of death." If then it was not because he said, I AM THE CHRIST, that he was so condemned, it follows that it was because he added to this the profession that he was the Son of God, and would be demonstrated as such by the dignity and glory of his second coming in the clouds of heaven. And as we find that on having previously professed himself to be the Son of God, the Jews took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer, it is clear that they understood that this profession implied an assumption of Divinity; which our Lord himself never treated as a mistake, by explaining the phrase in any lower sense than they understood it in, either on the occasions referred to, or on his trial. This then was the alleged blasphemy for which our Lord was sentenced to death by the sanhedrim; and this was acknowledged by the Jews themselves, who urged his death,

67 ᵛ Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with * the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69 ¶ ˣ Now Peter sat without in the

ᵛ Isaiah l, 6.—* Or, *rods*.

ˣ Mark xiv, 66; Luke xxii, 55; John xviii, 25.

and mocked him upon the cross, "because he said he was the Son of God." Thus our Lord witnessed to this great truth before his judges, not only that he was "the Son of man," and the Messiah; but also, as implying the lofty claim of Divinity, that he was THE SON OF GOD. As to the second point, the guilt of his judges, it may indeed be said that, believing him to be a mere man, and yet hearing him assume to himself a claim and a title of Divinity, on their own principles and views they could do nothing less than convict him. But this plausible palliation has no foundation. The trial was for an alleged spiritual offence, and involved therefore theological principles to be determined solely by their own scriptures. Our Lord professed to be the Messiah; there could be no blasphemy simply in that: and if he added to that the claim of "Son of God," and declared also that he would come "in the clouds of heaven," their own scriptures had entitled the Messiah "the Son of God," as in the second Psalm; and had declared that he should come in the clouds of heaven, as in the prophecy of Daniel, to which our Lord referred. Both these passages their most ancient commentators, authorities in their own Church, refer to the Messiah; and the whole question, therefore, between the sanhedrim and Jesus, had his trial been conducted with any thing like honesty and fairness, was whether he had given, or could give, sufficient proofs of his being the Messiah; for if so, the rest, according to their Scriptures, the only law they could follow in this case, necessarily followed: he was the Son of God, according to David; and he would come in the clouds of heaven, according to Daniel. Instead, however, of proceeding in this manner, they closed their eyes upon all the proofs he had given of his being the Messiah,—upon the evidence especially of that stupendous miracle which he had so lately wrought in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the raising of Lazarus; of which, indeed, it is probable that some of the council had been witnesses, and of which none could be ignorant: nor did they seek on the occasion of his trial any new or more satisfactory proof; but surrendering themselves at once to their prejudices and hatred, first assumed that he was an impostor, then suborned witnesses to substantiate a charge of blasphemy, and finally determined his own confession to be blasphemous; which it could not be, provided he was the Messiah,—the grand point on which the whole turned, but which they determined not to investigate. Thus justice could not be more violently outraged by a court; and the fierce determination with which they sought his death is the strongest proof that the truth of his professions, and consequently his innocence, was a subject on which they not only did not desire information, but on which these blood-thirsty persecutors determined to admit none. The circumstances of the case also demonstrated this: their bargaining with one of his disciples to betray him; their apprehension of him secretly in the night, although he was, as he himself alleged, daily in the temple; and the indecent haste with which they proceeded on so important a trial, beginning and completing it in *the night*, contrary to the Jewish canons, which enjoined that "capital causes should be tried in the day, and finished in the day;" and, finally, the tumultous manner in which they resisted all the efforts of the Roman governor to save him,—preferring the liberation of a notorious and pestilent robber, to one who had gone about doing good, and against whom they could find no consistent accusation.

Verse 67. *Spit in his face.*—This, in all nations, has been held to be an expression of the utmost contempt and abhorrence. The persons who inflicted this and other indignities were probably the officers and creatures of the sanhedrim, then in attendance, to whose rudeness he was surrendered as soon as the sentence of guilty had been pronounced.

Buffeted him; and others smote, &c.—Κολαφιζειν signifies to smite with clenched fist; ραπιζειν, to strike with the palm of the hand. And to blows, no doubt severe, they added derision of his prophetic character; for, having blindfolded him, they said, *Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is it that smote thee?* Such is the first affecting scene of our Lord's humiliation and passion: and yet in these minor circumstances of contumely and insult, with what astonishing particularity were the words of prophecy fulfilled, and that by the perfect free agency of these violent men! "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Verse 69. *Peter sat without in the palace.*—In the αυλη, or open interior court, which is said by Mark to be "beneath;" so that the vestibule, πυλων, in which the sanhedrim had assembled, was somewhat elevated; and what was transacted there was probably visible to those in the court.

palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto *him*

The three first evangelists give the denials of Peter in a continuous narrative, which, as being distinct from, though contemporaneous with, the trial of our Lord, was a matter of indifference. It was also, as Macknight observes, optional whether it was related before or after our Lord's trial. The two first evangelists narrate it after, St. Luke before; but "St. John has preserved the exact order of the proceedings, beginning with the first denial, which happened immediately after Peter entered the court of the high priest's house, then giving the history of the trial as the principal fact, and concluding with the subsequent denials."

Verse 69. *A damsel came to him.*—This female servant was the portress of the gate, the same who had let in Peter through the intercession of John who was already in the court: this circumstance probably made the woman conclude that Peter as well as John was a disciple of Christ; for if John obtained admission, he was "known to the high priest," John xviii, 15; and it could scarcely be unknown that for several years he had been in attendance upon Christ. St. Matthew makes the damsel directly charge Peter with being a disciple: St. John speaks interrogatively; but the interrogation there is not to be understood as used for inquiry, but as a stronger mode of putting an affirmation.

Verse 70. *Denied before all.*—Before all the officers of justice, and others who were in the court, and that in the most explicit manner: *I know not what thou sayest*, being a common form of denying any knowledge of a fact or person. The publicity of this denial was a great aggravation of Peter's sin.

Verse 71. *And when he was gone out into the porch.*—The porch, πυλων, was the vestibule or hall in which the trial of our Lord was conducted, and opened into the interior court in which Peter was, at the fire, with the servants. In this place and company he still was at his second denial, John xviii, 25; and St. Matthew's words, εξελθοντα δε αυτον εις τον πυλωνα, ειδεν αυτον αλλη, may indicate no more than that he was in the act of going, or gave indications of his intention to go, into the hall where the court sat, when a second maid challenged him with being a follower *of Jesus of Nazareth*. From Peter's reply, as recorded by St. Luke, "Man, I am not," it may be presumed that the maid's challenge was taken up by the bystanders, in whose presence it was made, and to whom the information was indeed given, and by one of the men it was pressed more eagerly than the rest, and to him therefore Peter's denial of the maid's allegation was directed. This denial was, however, accompanied by an oath: he denied μεθ' ορκου, thinking, no doubt, that a second accusation needed to be rebutted by a solemn appeal to Heaven; his fears and a carnal policy hiding, for the moment, from his conscience the enormity of the foul crime of a direct perjury.

Verse 73. *They that stood by.*—Peter, according to St. Matthew and St. Mark, was the third time charged with being a follower of Jesus, by those "that stood by;" but as all did not probably speak at once, but having observed, no doubt, something peculiar in Peter's manner, as was natural, considering his circumstances, they prosecuted their scrutiny into the strongly suspected fact, by putting one forward to urge their suspicions upon him. St. Luke therefore relates generally that another man now charged him; and St. John, with greater particularity, tells us that this man was the kinsman of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off. From St. Luke we learn that about an hour elapsed between Peter's second and third denial: yet that space had not brought him to any due sense of the great fault which he had committed; for he now *began to curse and to swear, I know not the man.* The charge had indeed been brought so close to him, that he probably thought that only the most desperate course could extricate him from present danger, the fear of which absorbed every other consideration. What indeed could he say? "Truly, thou art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee;" his most intimate followers are known to be Galileans, and thy speech shows that thou art a Galilean; and besides, did I not see thee in the garden with him?—a shrewd hint that he suspected him to be the man who had cut off the ear of his relative; and this no doubt increased Peter's terror. Thus was this once bold but frail man placed in circumstances in which he must take the risk of suffering and dying with his Lord, or of sinning in a high and almost desperate degree. He failed again in the trial; for no man gains strength to resist greater evils by complying with the lesser, but is, on the contrary, the more powerfully disposed to add one offence to another. On the first charge he simply though explicitly denies; on the second, he

they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

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appeals by an oath to God; on the third, he adds violent and gross profaneness to perjury: *Then began he to curse and to swear*, to accompany his appeals to God with imprecations upon himself if he spoke falsely, when he declared, *I know not the man.* Καταναθεματιζειν is to declare any one to be καταναθεμα, *accursed* and *execrable*, and therefore liable to the greatest punishments in this and the future world; and when used of a man's own self, is, under some condition, to imprecate the Divine vengeance upon himself.—Many MSS. read καταθεματιζειν, but the sense shows that a mistake must have occurred in transcription; for the softer import of this word not only does not agree with the *swearing* which is also ascribed to him, but is contrary to Mark xiv, 71: "But he began αναθεματιζειν και ομνυειν, to curse and to swear;" as in the text, only without the intensive κατα. Ομνυειν is to swear by the name of God. So deep and shameful was the fall of Peter! It is recorded by all the evangelists; and is both a striking proof of their integrity, and a lasting admonition to all to beware of the two fatal evils, self confidence and unwatchfulness. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Thy speech bewrayeth thee.—Bewray is an old English word, which signifies to reveal or discover. Thus Spenser:—

"Man by nothing is so well *bewray'd*
As by his manners."

St. Mark has it, "Thou art a Galilean; and thy speech agreeth thereunto;" the dialect of Galilee being more rude than that of Judea. Hence the Talmudists say, "The law was confirmed in the hands of the men of Judah, who were careful of their language; but not in the hands of the men of Galilee, who were not careful of their language."—Peter was therefore known to be a Galilean by his style and pronunciation, just as the men of Ephraim were detected by the testword Shibboleth.

Verse 74. *And immediately the cock crew.*—And at the fulfilment of this signal, we learn from St. Luke that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." The interior of the vestibule or hall in which our Lord was enduring his trial was within view of those who were in the court, so distant that they could not hear distinctly what was said, but near enough for our Lord to convey by his look to Peter that he KNEW what had occurred, that he FELT that he had committed the sin against which he had warned him, and to fix his attention upon the crowing of the cock as the accomplishment of his prediction. This was the last cock crow, or about three in the morning.

Verse 75. *And he went out, &c.*—Overwhelmed by remorse and shame, he left the place, going out of the court probably into some secret place, *and wept bitterly;* the depth of his sorrow, and the abundance of his tears, poured forth from a truly broken and a contrite spirit, answering to the greatness of his offence. St. Mark has expressed this with inimitable pathos and simplicity: "And when HE THOUGHT THEREON, he wept." See note on Mark xiv, 72.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.* 3 *Judas hangeth himself.* 19 *Pilate, admonished of his wife,* 24 *washeth his hands:* 26 *and looseth Barabbas.* 29 *Christ is crowned with thorns,* 34 *crucified,* 40 *reviled,* 50 *dieth, and is buried:* 66 *his sepulchre is sealed, and watched.*

1 WHEN morning was come, [a] all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

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[a] Mark xv, 1; Luke xxii, 66; John xviii, 28.

CHAPTER XXVII. Verse 1. *Took counsel to put him to death.*—They had already pronounced him "guilty of death," and now they take counsel to carry the sentence into effect. In this two things were to be effected: one was to obtain the confirmation of their sentence from Pilate; the other, so to mix up charges of seditious designs against the Roman power with the pretended offence against their religion, as to engage the Roman governor to take his execution upon himself, and to carry it into effect in the Roman mode by crucifixion. See note on chap. xxvi, 66.

3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that.*

5 And he cast down the pieces of

Verse 2. *Pontius Pilate the governor.*—Pilate has here the title of ηγεμων, which properly belonged to the proconsular or prætorian governors of the Roman provinces; because, though only procurator of Judea, which was an inferior dignity, he had the proconsular power of life and death, which was not unusual in the lesser provinces. Hence, although Josephus calls him επιτροπος, or procurator, he sometimes gives him the higher title also, and thus confirms the accuracy of the evangelist.

Verses 3–8. *Then Judas, when he saw that he was condemned, &c.*—This circumstance brought even Judas to repentance, that is, it awakened the horror of his conscience that he had been the means of murdering a person who he knew was guiltless of any crime. He had obtained the cursed pelf, the hope of which had blinded his judgment and stifled the struggles of his better feelings; and, the infatuating prize being in possession, the passion had subsided, reason had resumed her functions, the whole extent of his baseness and guilt flashed upon his soul, with the fears of the righteous retribution which awaited him. He *repented himself*, indeed; he would probably have parted with the world for the moment, avaricious as he was, if the foul, the damning deed could have been undone; but the result proved that, strong and agonizing as this feeling was, it was not "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation;" it was the repentance of the damned at the day of judgment, when the gate of mercy is for ever shut; for the wo was upon him, the wo of Him whom he had basely betrayed. Still, before he was permitted to execute upon himself that last act which was to seal his eternal destiny, his remorse was so overruled as to force from even him a public declaration of the blameless character of the Master of whom he had been so unworthy and false a disciple; a testimony which was to be perpetuated by the purchase of a field and the imposition of a new name upon it, arising out of the circumstance of its purchase, which should render it a public monument for time to come both of the truth of the fact, and the evidence it affords to the innocency of our Lord and the malice of his unjust judges. The whole action is most vividly represented, and the more impressively so from the absence of all emotion in the evangelical narrative in this as well as in all other scenes, even those the most moving. He comes to the chief priests and elders, assembled in council, in the chamber appointed for the sittings of that court, in a part of the temple, whither they seem to have adjourned from the house of Caiaphas; he brings with him the thirty pieces of silver, wrung from the grasp of his covetousness by his agonized conscience; he declares to his employers that he had sinned, that he had betrayed innocent blood; and when they refused to take back the money, he casts it down in the temple, as though his possession of it only heightened his torment; departs, and hangs himself, unable to sustain life and bear the light of offended Heaven! The cold villany of the chief priests and elders, the leading magistrates and judges of the Jewish nation, stands in singular contrast to this; but is equally forcible as a testimony to the unjust manner in which our Lord had been treated at his trial. *What is that to us? see thou to that:* as though they were not equally guilty who used a wicked instrument to accomplish an unjust purpose as the instrument himself; and as though they were not bound to receive this evidence of a repenting traitor in his favour, and give it its due weight in their representation of the case to the Roman governor. Thus the judges, by proclaiming their own guilt, demonstrated by their sanguinary obduracy, as fully as Judas by his remorse, the triumphant innocence of our blessed Lord of every thing which could render him, according to their unjust sentence, "guilty of death." But the evidence does not close here, and the reader will mark what follows.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful, &c.—The money cast away by Judas is now to be disposed of, and they determined that it could not lawfully be put into *the treasury*, κορβαναν, the place where the offerings for the service of the temple were put; thus verifying our Lord's words, "Straining out the gnat, and swallowing a camel," purchasing innocent blood with the money, and yet scrupling to deposit it in a sacred place; but thus tacitly and unintentionally declaring that it had been the wages of iniquity, and was itself polluted by the unholy purpose to which it had been appropriated. This scruple rested on no written law; but they probably reasoned from analogy: if "the hire of a harlot," Deut. xxiii, 18, was not to be offered to God in pursuance of a vow; how much more the money by which a life had been purchased, and, they might have added, by which spotless innocence had been betrayed and murdered! After taking counsel on this point, they agreed, under an

silver in the temple, [b] and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, [c] The field of blood, unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was

[b] Acts i, 18.

[c] Acts i, 19.

overruling Providence, to purchase "the potter's field," so called, probably because potters' earth had been dug out of it; and being now exhausted of that material, and unfit for any agriculture, its value was small, and it was therefore purchased for the mean price of "thirty pieces of silver." From this time the field was called Aceldama, the field of blood; not, we may well conjecture, from the imposition of that name upon it by the chief priests, as by popular and habitual designation. Thus it remained marked with this new and expressive name, both as a proof of the fact, if it should be hereafter questioned, and a memorial of that remorse of Judas, for his treachery, which afforded so striking a proof of the guiltlessness of his betrayed Master. "The ordering of Divine Providence in these events was most signal, and not less in the overruled purpose of the Jewish sanhedrim in the use to which they applied it; for by making it a burial place it was the longer preserved, by the respect paid to places appropriated to such purposes, from obliteration, and might probably remain marked by its tombs, the tombs of *strangers*, long after the capture of Jerusalem. At all events, it remained till after the publication of St. Matthew's gospel in Judea; and as he could not relate a fact as notorious to all the inhabitants without being contradicted, if not truly stated, so the fact being established, the history with which it stood connected was confirmed by a durable and visible monument. To the publicity of the fact Peter appeals, Acts i, 19. And it was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to say, "the field of blood." Jerome says that it was to be seen in his days in Ælia, (the name of the city built upon the site of Jerusalem,) on the south side of Mount Sion.

The mode in which Judas committed suicide has exercised the ingenuity of critics, ancient and modern. This has arisen from a supposed discrepancy between the account of Matthew and that of Peter in Acts i, 18, who says nothing of hanging, but states that, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. Suicer's Thesaurus shows the different opinions of the fathers. Among the moderns some suppose he died of suffocation from grief; others, from rage and remorse; and that after death his body swelled and burst. Campbell translates, "he went away and strangled himself," leaving the mode undetermined; Wakefield, "was choked with grief," following Hammond and still older commentators. All, however, acknowledge that the word used by Matthew commonly means to hang one's self; of which classical examples are abundant, as also examples from the Septuagint. The ancient versions too give the same sense; nor is there the least inconsistency between the statement of the evangelist and St. Peter, in Acts i, 18; and no necessity therefore exists to strain the meaning of the passage of the former, *απελθων απηγξατο, he went and hanged himself*, into any unusual sense. St. Matthew relates the fact and mode of his suicide generally; St. Peter, to mark more strongly the infliction of the Divine vengeance upon so wretched a criminal, dwells upon these additional circumstances in his death, which so strikingly impressed it with the character of a supernatural retribution. He hanged himself; but, *πρηνης γενομενος*, becoming prostrate, that is, falling headlong or rather upon his face,—either after death, or during the struggles of death, being violently cast down from the place where he was hanging by the hand of avenging Heaven, in order to make him a public example,—he burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out. That something preternatural is implied in this account, appears evident from the description of his body: for this effect could not follow from the mere breaking of the rope and his falling upon the ground, unless he had chosen a precipice for the place of his execution, which indeed some have supposed, but without any warrant from the history, or the real import of the terms employed.

Verse 9. *Then was fulfilled, &c.*—Because in these words the prophecy said to have been fulfilled is referred to *Jeremy the prophet*, attempts have been made, but in vain, to find in the writings of Jeremiah something corresponding with them. The quotation is manifestly from Zechariah xi, 12, 13: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the

spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, [d]And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, * whom they of the children of Israel did value;

[d] Zech. xi, 12.

* Or, *whom they bought of the children of Israel.*

house of the Lord." There is a considerable variation in the words as they stand in St. Matthew; and this, together with what is alleged to be the obscurity of the prediction as it stands in Zechariah, has been made use of to support the notion that here as well as in other places, the evangelist does not quote the prophecy as fulfilled by the event which he narrates, but accommodates the words to the event. But no end could be answered by this, except to introduce a sort of literary ornament into his narrative; an artifice which we are forbidden to attribute to any of the evangelists from the rigid simplicity they uniformly observe. The subject has, it is true, its difficulties; but none which are insuperable. No practical end of conviction or illustration can be assigned for the introduction of these words of the prophet, unless we admit the intention of St. Matthew to have been to adduce, in addition to many others, a signal and direct fulfilment of those prophetic indications of the life of our Lord which the Jewish Scriptures were allowed to contain. The first inquiry necessary to settle this point must be into the import of that section of the prophecy of Zechariah in which the quotation stands. And on this it may be generally observed that it has no apparent reference to any events which took place previously to the time of Christ. The evidence of this is so strong that the most ancient Jewish commentators themselves refer it to the Messiah, although, of course, they give it a different interpretation, but an entirely conjectural one; thus declaring that THEY know of no fact or series of facts in their history to which they can refer it. The prophecy is highly figurative, and therefore proportionably obscure; but several points break through it which no one can mistake, as, 1. That God had appointed one eminent shepherd to feed his flock, the Jewish people, called emphatically, "the flock of slaughter," with reference to some wasting destruction which threatened to come upon them, and which from the time when Zechariah wrote we know must be subsequent to that which had already been produced by the invasion of the king of Babylon. This is a circumstance which agrees with the ministry of our Lord, who announces himself under the character of a shepherd, and the object of whose care was to avert the impending ruin of his people by bringing them to repentance. 2. That "the shepherds," of the flock spoken of, were without regard to them: "Their own shepherds pity them not;" in which we have an exact picture of the Jewish teachers in our Lord's days, men who neglected their charge and despised the people. 3. That a strong enmity existed between these shepherds and him whom God himself had appointed: "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me;" words which have the force of even historical truth though in the form of prophecy, and justly describe the holy "loathing" which Christ had of the pride, hypocrisy, and wickedness of the scribes and Pharisees, and their malignant abhorrence of him. 4. That even this divinely appointed Shepherd finally gives up his charge in judicial visitation: "Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another;" an awful description of a people abandoned to entire ruin, which nothing has occurred to realize, but the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, an event which signally answers to the prophecy. 5. That a covenant between the people intended and this Shepherd was broken: "And I took my staff, even beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people." And to what can this refer but to the entire annulling of the whole Mosaic covenant, by the rejection of the Jews as a peculiar people? 6. That a part of this very rejected and abandoned flock should admit his authority and mission: "And so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew" ("certainly knew," margin) "that it was the word of the Lord." This is one of the most noticeable part of the prophecy; and the distinction made between the body of the flock, and a portion called the poor of the flock, who are characterized by "waiting upon him," or, as the phrase implies, worshipping and serving this great Shepherd, and acknowledging the truth of his word, as "the word of Jehovah," can only be referred to the few, and the despised and persecuted part of the Jews, who followed Christ, believed on him worshipped him as their God, and acknowledged the heavenly origin of his doctrine. Now all these particulars, which bring us down to the passage quoted by St. Matthew, do so directly and obviously relate to our Lord and his official administration, that the only conclusion to which such a connection and scope of the discourse can justly lead us, is, that the words themselves so quoted relate to him likewise, and that, in fact, they give the great reason of this his terrible dealing with his ancient "flock," which was then despising and rejecting him; one most marked and flagrant instance of which is, their estimating him at the price of a slave, "thirty pieces of silver,"—the "good-

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him,

ly price," as the prophet sarcastically observes, "at which I was prized of them." This application, is made the more striking by the particular, which is added, that this price was "cast unto the potter," that is, cast down in order, as the event was, to be given to the potter, for the purchase of his field. So consistently does the application of the whole to Christ run through the prophecy; and so manifestly does it appear that the evangelist must have quoted the passage, as a direct and proper prediction of the event!

The second inquiry respects the verbal differences between the words of Zechariah and those cited by St. Matthew. The only variations of any importance arise from this, that the Messiah is represented by the prophet as the actor in the transaction: "If ye think good, give me my price. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter," &c.; which difficulty is solved by reflecting, that it is frequent in Scripture to represent a thing as done by him who is the occasion of its being done. Instances abound in the prophets; and even in relation to this very event, we have an instance in Acts i, 18, where St. Peter, speaking of Judas, says, "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of his iniquity;" meaning in a style of speaking familiar to a Hebrew, that he was the occasion of the field being purchased, by bringing back the reward of his iniquity and casting it down in the temple. The spirit and energy which this mode of expression gives to writing, is manifest; but in prophecy there was often a deeper intention. The object was to throw a veil over the events predicted; and this was effectually done often by transferring the actions made the subject of prophecy to a higher and more mysterious agent, distinct from the real one, yet so that the event, when it occurred, should explain the whole. God himself is therefore frequently, nay, almost constantly, in the writings of the prophets, said to do what he permits to be done for good or for evil; and thus the doctrine of his control over the whole course of things is preserved, and prophecy is prevented from assuming that *historical* character which might have interfered with the free agency of men. To apply this rule to the passage in question: it was not to be expected that the prophet should narrate the event of the betrayal of Messiah in the manner it occurred, by bringing the Pharisees and Judas in person upon the scene. The act is therefore transferred to the Divine Messiah himself, because of his permitting it, and so controlling the CIRCUMSTANCES of the sin, though not the sin itself, that that vicious intention and purpose of the actors should be accomplished in one particular mode, and with such circumstances as should overrule it to their ultimate confusion. For this reason the Messiah is brought in by the prophet as though he were the great actor; but St. Matthew, taught the intent of the Holy Spirit, gives the SENSE of the prediction rather than the exact words, and refers the acts to the true actors,—*and* THEY *took and gave them, &c.* Nor was it necessary to quote them with precise exactness in order to convince the Jews, for whose use in the first place he wrote his gospel. He evidently quotes them in brief, but with sufficient plainness to refer the Jew to the passage in his own Scriptures, that he might read them there. This view renders much of that criticism superfluous which has been resorted to in order to confirm the citation of St. Matthew with the words of Zechariah, and which, after all, is for the most part conjectural.

A third question on this quotation arises out of its being referred by the evangelist, not to Zechariah, but to Jeremiah, in whose acknowledged book of prophecies it is not certainly found. For this various solutions have been offered; as, an error of transcription; that the words occur in some lost prophecy of Jeremiah; that the Old Testament was divided by the Jews into three great parts, the law, the Psalms, and the prophets, beginning with Jeremiah; so that any quotation from them might go under the name of that prophet; that several of the last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremiah, which is supported by Mr. Mede and Bishop Kidder. Against some of these solutions great objections lie; and the most probable is, that St. Matthew wrote only, *δια του προφητου, by the prophet*, which is confirmed by some MSS., and by the Syriac version. "And," says Bishop Pearce, "I am the more inclined to think so, because I find that Matthew does five times make no mention of the prophet whose words he quotes, one instance of which we have in verse 15 of this chapter." The word Jeremy crept very early into the text; which might arise from some transcriber having the celebrated passage respecting the potter and the clay in his mind, though that relates to a different subject.—From the identity of the expressions it must be concluded that the words are from the book of Zechariah.

Verse 11. *Art thou the king of the Jews?*—This question could not have arisen from any thing which occurred at the trial before the sanhedrim, and was probably suggested to Pilate by the chief priests, whose object it

saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 [e] Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him,

[e] St. Luke, chap. xxiii, 17.

was to implicate Jesus in a charge of seditious intentions, so that the Roman governor might both the more readily consent to his death, and take his execution into his own hands, and, according to the Roman manner, crucify him.

Thou sayest.—This, as above observed, was a form of affirmation. Our Lord without hesitation declared that he was the King of the Jews; but showed that he knew the authors of the charge of sedition suggested it by asking, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" At the same time he takes care that Pilate should not proceed in ignorance upon the malicious suggestions of the priests, that he had professed to be the King of the Jews politically, by explaining his meaning, "My kingdom is not of this world," it is not a civil but a spiritual reign; and this was done that Pilate might know that Cesar had nothing to fear from him, John xviii, 33, &c. There was great artifice in preferring so dangerous a charge against him before the Roman governor: Pilate appears at once to have perceived that if our Lord had professed to be a king, it was in some mystical sense, and not literally. Accordingly, St. Luke adds, "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man." This so enraged his accusers, that Pilate, anxious to get quit of the case, and gathering from their clamours against him that he was a Galilean, sent him to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, who was then at Jerusalem. See Luke xxiii, 5, &c. This circumstance is omitted by Matthew, who proceeds with what occurred after Jesus had been sent back to Pilate. It is to be remarked that although our Lord replied to Pilate when he asked him whether he professed to be King of the Jews, he remained quite silent when Pilate asked him again, after his accusers had poured forth various accusations, *Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?* The reason is obvious: had not our Lord repelled the charge of sedition, Pilate would have had a show of justice in condemning him; but to clamorous and vague charges he answered nothing, as knowing that they could not affect his character, nor make his condemnation appear less unjust. He was to die the *innocent* for the guilty; and it was enough that he established his innocence against every specific charge, that it might appear; and how truly it did appear, is showed in the reiterated justification of him by Pilate.

Verse 15. *Now at that feast, &c.*—The Persian version renders it, "every year, on the day of the feast," that is, the passover. But this release of a criminal does not appear to have been a custom which originated with the Jews. It was certainly not derived from their law, which, as St. Paul says, Heb. x, 28, inflicted death "without mercy," *χωρις οικτιρμων*. It was the custom with both Greeks and Romans to distinguish some of their festivals in this manner; and this had probably been first imitated by Herod the Great, who conformed in many respects to Gentile manners. The Christian emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, used to release all prisoners at Easter, except for some specified crimes.

Verse 16. *A notable prisoner, called Barabbas.*—This man was *notable*, marked or distinguished, for his crimes, being guilty of sedition and murder: and was withal a robber, probably a leader of one of those banditti who infested the country. His name, Bar Abba, the son of a father, was a common one among the Jews; but his character is strongly exhibited to show the excessive hatred of the Jewish council to our Lord, and their eagerness for his blood. To accomplish this end they were willing that a mischievous and dangerous felon should be again let loose upon society. Thus, by another circumstance, was the partial and unjust character of Christ's judges made manifest, and by consequence the innocence of our Lord was the more strongly illustrated. It was not the populace that cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas," until the members of the sanhedrim, the great judges and magistrates of the land, had *persuaded them*, verse 20; and thus, in prosecuting our Lord, they openly declared that they had no regard to justice or law. This was evident to Pilate, *who knew that for envy*, through a malignant feeling occa-

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 [f] But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

[f] John xviii, 40; Acts iii, 14.

sioned by his excellence, *they had delivered him*, and explains his reluctance to surrender him to their wishes.

Verse 19. *On the judgment seat.*—Causes were heard by the Roman governors in the prætorium; but judgment was pronounced in the open air, from a *βημα*, or tribunal formed of stone or marble.

His wife sent to him, &c.—Her name was Claudia Procula, and Grotius observes, this circumstance marks the time of the event, and affords an incidental proof of the veracity of the evangelist, for it was only in the reign of Tiberius that the wives of governors had obtained permission to attend them in the provinces. On this dream it would be useless to quote at length the various opinions, ancient and modern, which have been entertained. By the fathers and the most respectable commentators it has been referred to a supernatural cause; by some, and especially those of the so denominated rational school, it has been resolved into some natural cause, and especially to her having had her imagination disturbed by the accounts she had received of the character of Jesus, and the proceedings which were instituted against him. To make this the more probable, some have conjectured her to have been a devout woman and a Jewess; for which no authority is given. As some of these notions are influenced by the desire to get rid, as far as possible, of every thing supernatural, and especially of admonitory dreams, it may be generally observed that no critics are consistent here but the German neologians, who explain away every thing supernatural in the Scriptures. If critics are not, therefore, prepared to go to that infidel extreme, it is useless to object to one event in the Gospel history as supernatural, when many such must be allowed by themselves. The believer in the Bible, as a revelation from God, must believe that dreams have often been produced by a Divine agency: and it is as objectionable in *reason* as it is in *faith*, to deny that a phenomenon, so adapted to produce powerful impressions upon the mind, should not often be an agency which Providence employs for its own purposes. In this case no natural cause could be given for this singular and timely dream; for the attempt to solve it by supposing the wife of Pilate to be acquainted with Christ's character and works has no foundation. All that can be pleaded for it is probability: but probability is against it; for as Pilate was obviously unacquainted with our Lord, as he indicates a total ignorance of his former life, there is no reason to assume that Pilate's wife had turned her attention to his proceedings, if she had ever heard of them, or that she had felt any interest in them, since our Lord was but occasionally at Jerusalem, and the Romans held the religion of the Jews in great contempt. But even had she known more of him, then there is not any reason to conclude, if she had even reverenced him, her dream could not have been produced by her knowledge of his dangers. For it occurred during the same night in which he had been *secretly* apprehended, and his trial had been going on in the council while she was asleep, and all without the knowledge and consent of Pilate himself, who was called upon only to confirm a sentence passed in a Jewish, not in a Roman court, and which they had a right to hold without his permission. She must, therefore, be considered as wholly ignorant of the transactions of the night, of Christ's betrayal, apprehension, and condemnation by the sanhedrim. The occurrence of the dream, the powerful manner in which it affected her, the message which she sent to her husband during the day, after the proceedings against Jesus had become public, when seated on the tribunal; and the testimony given by a Gentile woman of rank, from the impression of a singular dream, in favour of the righteous character of Christ, must all be referred to a higher than a natural cause, or to mere accident. It was the design of God to multiply testimonies to the holy and blameless character of our Lord, that it might be the more strongly marked to all future ages that he died, "the JUST for the unjust, to bring us to God." Judas, by his confession; the false witnesses, by their disagreement; the judges, by their violence, manifest injustice, and the vagueness of their charges; Pilate's wife, by her message to her lord; and Pilate himself, all proclaimed the perfect INNOCENCE of the victim; who was, nevertheless, yielded up to the clamours of his persecutors. How strange are these events! and yet how perfectly they accord with the true character and design of our Saviour's passion and death!

Have thou nothing to do, &c.—*Μηδεν σοι και τω δικαιω εκεινω*, a mode of speaking

22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it.*

25 Then answered all the people, and

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equivalent to a strong exhortation not to do him the least injury, nor implicate himself in the guilt of condemning the innocent.

This day in a dream.—By *this day* is meant *this night*, because the day in Judea was reckoned to begin on the preceding evening, and therefore the night on which she had the dream was a constituent part of the day on which she sent the message. So Gen. i, 5, "The evening and the morning were the first DAY."

Verse 23. *But they cried out the more, &c.*—Thus it is manifest that our Lord had no charge against him examined with judicial care by Pilate, but was sacrificed to a popular clamour, the fear of a *tumult*, and an apprehension lest the Jews should represent him as negligent in his government, and a careless friend or an enemy to Cesar. As a popular tumult in favour of our Lord had been apprehended by the chief priests, for which reason they had proceeded so secretly against him, the circumstance of the multitude now clamouring for his crucifixion under the influence of his persecutors, has given occasion to many reflections being made on the sudden changes to which popular opinion is liable. These observations are indeed very just, but not quite applicable in this case. The people most favourable to our Lord were chiefly those from the country, who were attending the feast, and especially from Galilee. The multitude, now under the direction of the priests and elders, were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and probably those of the lowest rank, over whom the leading members of the council, chiefly wealthy Sadducees, would have great control. Now also the Roman governor had the cause before him, with the military at command, and those who were better disposed to Christ were overawed.

Verse 24. *He took water and washed his hands, &c.*—Figurative allusions to this custom appear in the Old Testament. "I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar." It has been disputed whether Pilate in this act followed a Jewish or a Gentile custom. That it was a Jewish emblematical action, appears from Deut. xxi, 6, 7: "And all the elders of that city that is next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley," the heifer slain for expiation, "and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it." It is scarcely probable, however, that Pilate paid much regard to Jewish ceremonies. Washing the hands was used by the Greeks and Romans on the commission of involuntary homicide; but that was for the purpose of expiation, which Pilate could not intend; for by this act he declared that he was innocent of the blood of Christ, not that he had contracted a guilty stain which needed lustration. It may be taken therefore as a strong mode of declaring his sentiments, by an emblematical action, suggested by the earnestness of his mind, without any reference to any particular rite either Jewish or Pagan, though founded upon the general practice of washing as a symbol of purity, and one which was overruled to render his declaration of our Lord's innocence the more impressive and remarkable; for the act could not be mistaken, though attempts might afterward be made to pervert his words; and to the Jews the assertion of Christ's innocence must have been most unwelcome. This action he accompanied with the memorable saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person;" most iniquitously indeed surrendering to death one he declared *just;* but at the same time proclaiming that those who were guilty of the act were guilty of *blood*, and brought themselves under the charge of murdering the innocent.

See ye to it.—Pilate reasoned as ill as he acted. He vainly hoped to transfer the guilt from himself to the Jews; and because he had attempted in vain to persuade them to desist from their purpose, thought himself excused in yielding to the difficulties to which their violence and threats exposed him. Philo describes him as "naturally inflexible, rigid, and self-willed;" but he had already had to contend with two insurrections of the Jews produced by his opposing their religious prejudices; one, on occasion of his attempting to bring the Roman standards into Jerusalem; the other, from his applying the wealth of the sacred treasury to other uses; and the fear of a third, on this occasion, coupled with the still powerful apprehension lest the Jews should misrepresent his conduct to his jealous and sanguinary master, the Emperor Tiberius, prevailed over his convictions. Yet the supreme power of life and death was in his hands, and the difficulty and danger of acting right form no justification for acting wrong. Pilate washed his hands; but his conscience was still left black with the very guilt which he de-

said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 ε Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the *common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers.*

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29 ¶ And when they had platted a

ε John xix, 1.

* Or *governor's house.*

cleared would lie upon the Jews,—the guilt of innocent blood.

Verse 25. *His blood be upon us, &c.*—What Pilate was eager, though in vain, to transfer from himself, these infatuated and infuriated people were ready to take—the blood of the innocent. Among the Athenians, witnesses devoted themselves and their children, if they should accuse falsely. This also is implied in the form of our judicial oath, "So help you God," only as you speak the truth. Grotius shows that this kind of denunciation and devotement was used by the Roman witnesses, "*Sit sanguis istius super nos*," as here the Jews, "His blood be upon us!" and, as they were before a Roman tribunal, they might naturally adopt the Roman form. But they render it more emphatic by adding, *and upon our children:* and fearfully was their bold imprecation verified. In the subsequent Roman war, "wrath came upon them to the uttermost;" and, to make the retribution the more marked, great numbers of them were put to death by crucifixion —that torturing mode of death, for the infliction of which upon our Lord they so fiercely clamoured. Five hundred of them a day were sometimes crucified by Titus, till at length, as Josephus, who was witness of these horrors, says, "Room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies."

Verse 26. *When he had scourged him.*—Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus concerning himself, "And they shall mock him, and scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and kill him," Mark x, 34. Scourging among the Romans preceded capital punishment; but as Pilate attempted after this to save our Lord, it is probable that he hoped, by this minor infliction, to pacify them, and effect his deliverance. Slaves among the Romans were scourged with the *flagella*, a severe instrument which cut deep into the flesh; but freemen with rods. The original word here used would, however, intimate that the severer instrument was used in the case of Jesus. And in this particular also the retributive justice of God upon the Jews was strikingly marked; for we learn from Josephus that in this manner they were treated before crucifixion: "when they had SCOURGED them, and TORMENTED them before death all manner of ways, they crucified them over against the wall of the city."

Delivered him to be crucified.—At length yielding against his convictions, and admitting that very charge of sedition made against him by his enemies, as the kind of death inflicted upon him shows; although he had previously declared that he found no fault in him. The conduct of Pilate admits therefore of no palliation.

Verse 27. *The common hall.*—The prætorium, or Pilate's residence, formerly the palace of Herod, in the upper part of the city. Pilate's tribunal or "judgment seat" was on the outside; and the place into which Christ was now led was probably the interior court of the palace.

The whole band of soldiers.—This was a cohort of soldiers, or the tenth part of a legion. Five Romon cohorts were stationed at Cesarea, and one at Jerusalem: but the latter was a cohort of the largest number.

Verse 28. *A scarlet robe.*—Χλαμυδα κοκκινην, or a *crimson* robe, such as that worn by kings and people of rank; and this was done in mockery of his title, the king of the Jews. St. Mark says, "a *purple* robe," πορφυρα; but the terms are not unfrequently interchanged, both designating the same or nearly the same colour. A cloak of this colour was worn by the superior Roman officers.

Verse 29. *A crown of thorns.*—Ακανθα is used as a general term for those prickly plants which we denominate thorns; so that the species cannot be determined by it. "The naba or nabda of the Arabians," says Hasselquist in his Travels, "is in all probability the tree which afforded the crown of thorns put upon the head of Christ: it grows common in the east. This plant was very fit for the purpose, for it has many small and sharp spines: a crown might easily be made of those soft, round, and pliant branches; and what in my opinion seems to be the greatest proof is, that the leaves resemble those of ivy, as they are of a very deep green. Perhaps the soldiers would have a plant somewhat resembling that with which the emperors and generals were used to be crowned, that there might be satire and calumny even in the punishment." Bishop Pearce, however, thinks that the herb *acanthus* was used, which has the epithet *smooth*, as well as *flexible*, in the Latin poets; and that mocking, not torture, was the object of thus placing a crown or wreath upon the head of

crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews!

30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

32 [h] And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

33 [i] And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34 ¶ They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted

[h] Mark xv, 21; Luke xxiii, 26.

[i] John xix, 17.

our Saviour. But whether this plant grows in Palestine, is not certain; and some common thorn nearest at hand, and to be found in any waste place, was more likely to be used by the ferocious Roman soldiers. Both Mark and John call the crown στεφανος ακανθινος, which "adjective," says Campbell, "both in sacred use and classical, plainly denotes *spineus*, thorny." The crown having been placed on the head of our Saviour, and *a reed*, the mock representative of a sceptre, *they bowed the knee before him*, and in derision said, *Hail, king of the Jews*. They did not turn his claim to be the Messiah into mockery; this these pagans knew nothing of; but they regarded him in the light in which it had been the artifice of the chief priests and elders to place him, as a state prisoner condemned for aspiring to the sovereignty in opposition to Cesar. During the whole of this scene of contumely and barbarous sport, to which were added spitting upon him, and smiting him on the head with the *reed* or cane, the evangelists record no word or action of our Lord. He sustained the whole in silence and unresisting submission, and thus fulfilled the words of the prophet, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Verse 32. *And as they came out.*—Out of the city; for as in the wilderness offenders were executed without the camp, so at Jerusalem without the walls of the city. There was also a typical allusion in this, to which St. Paul refers, Heb. xiii, 11–13: "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without THE GATE. Let us go forth therefore unto him without THE CAMP, bearing his reproach."

Him they compelled to bear his cross.—It was usual for criminals to bear their own cross. So Plautus: *Patibulum ferat per urbem, deinde affigatur cruci*, "Let him carry his cross through the city, and then be fastened to it." Our Saviour bore his own cross for some time; but, probably exhausted by previous ill usage, he appears to have sunk under its weight, so that, meeting Simon, a Cyrenian, "coming," says St. Mark, "out of the country," *they compelled him to bear his cross*,—they *pressed* him into this service, as the word imports. He was of Cyrene, a city of Lybia, where many Jews were located; but was now probably a resident at Jerusalem, and was returning thence from the country. It is not unlikely that he was singled out at the instigation of the Jews as a favourer of Christ; for St. Mark adds, he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, both celebrated among the first Christians.

Verse 33. *Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull.*—Golgotha is from the Chaldee גלגלתא Golgoltha, which signifies a skull, the last ל being suppressed for the sake of euphony. It was a hill near Jerusalem, and had its name from the skulls of malefactors who had been executed there. Koinoel asserts that when their bodies were permitted to be buried, the skulls were excepted, and left on the ground; but it is more probable that as the Jews did not bury malefactors in the sepulchres of their fathers, they were interred on the spot, and by digging fresh graves in the place at common executions, skulls would frequently be turned up, and perhaps left on the ground with little respect. The name Calvary is of the same import as Golgotha.

Verse 34. *Vinegar to drink mingled with gall.*—St. Mark says, "wine mingled with myrrh;" but the word χολη designates whatever is bitter, and so might be used of gall or myrrh. The vinegar was the sharp, common wine which, from its acidity, was called οξος. This wine was often mixed with certain bitter herbs, to impart to it an intoxicating quality, and was given to criminals before their execution. It was a custom for the honourable women of Jerusalem to prepare wine of this kind, and to give it freely to those about to suffer death, to render them less sensible of pain. We have no intimation that our Lord experienced this attention from this class of females, but some of his friends might thus minister to him; *but when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink*, resolved to sustain the whole weight of his sufferings, and not to submit to have his senses or rea-

his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, [k] They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 And sitting down, they watched him there;

37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[k] Psalm xxii, 18.

son dulled by any stupifying draught. There may probably be an allusion to this custom in the words of Solomon, Prov. xxxvi, 6: "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish."

Verse 35. *And they crucified him.*—This was at once the most ignominious and cruel of deaths; and was inflicted as the last mark of detestation upon slaves, robbers, murderers, and the vilest of the people. Hence the emphatic manner in which St. Paul refers to the crucifixion of Christ: "And became obedient unto death, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."

And parted his garments, casting lots.—From John xix, 23, it appears that the garments were divided into "four parts, to every soldier a part;" so that four soldiers were the executioners, under the direction of a centurion. The coat or robe being seamless, "woven from the top throughout," and probably peculiar in this respect, remained after this partition; and for this they cast lots, throwing the lots, as was customary, into a helmet. In this they unconsciously accomplished a prophecy: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots," Psalm xxii, 18. Several MSS. and versions wanting this quotation, it has been supposed that the words were written in the margin from St. John's gospel, where they are unquestionably found. Still it may be observed that it is quite in the manner of St. Matthew to notice, for the conviction of the Jews, the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and especially those which are expressed in a particular and minute manner. The whole Psalm from which this quotation is made, must be understood of Messiah, or if David was at all intended, it is in a lower sense; and, as in all those prophecies which have a twofold reference, there are passages which can only apply to the higher and ultimate person or event, so in this Psalm. Our Lord himself appears to give the Psalm a prophetic character relating to himself, by quoting its opening words when suffering on the cross. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" This act of the Roman soldiers is another instance of the exact and minute prescience of "the spirit of prophecy." No contrivance of Christ or of his disciples could bring about this correspondence of events to those spoken of him in a prophetic writing which had been in existence for ages. It was fulfilled by the Roman soldiers themselves, to whom the garments of malefactors fell as their perquisites; but was taken quite out of the common course of things, by the circumstance that they cast lots for his "vesture," or robe, which would not have happened but for another circumstance certainly not to be conjectured, not possible to have been foreseen by man, that this robe was "without seam, woven from the top throughout," so that to possess it whole excited the desire of each soldier, while each was anxious to submit his claim to the decision of the "lot."

Verse 36. *They watched him there.*—That is, the centurion and the soldiers under his command sat down near the cross, to see that the sentence was carried into complete effect, and that no one removed the body from the cross.

Verse 37.—*And set up over his head his accusation.*—This was according to custom. The crime for which the person was executed was written in black letters upon a white ground. The Syriac and Persian versions render it, "the cause of his death." Luke and John inform us that this τιτλος was in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: Hebrew, that is, the Palestinian dialect, which went vaguely by that name, as being the language of the populace; Greek, as a prevalent language both in Judea, and among the foreign Jews who were present at the passover at Jerusalem; and Latin, as the language of the conquerors of the country. The inscription which excluded Gentiles from the inner court of the temple was written in those three languages. The evangelists give the sense of the inscription rather than the exact words, and hence the variation which appears in their account. All agree, however, that the crime for which he was executed by the Romans was, that he claimed to be THE KING OF THE JEWS; but that for which he was condemned by the sanhedrim was, that he said, "I am the Son of God." The reasons why the sanhedrim urged his execution on a charge of treason have been above stated. Nor can any thing be a stronger proof of the utterly unjust treatment suffered by our blessed Lord from his judges than that he was condemned for one crime, and executed for one quite distinct; that is, he was not executed for the crime for which he was tried, nor tried on the charge for which he was executed!

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 [1] He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was

[1] Psalm xxii, 8; Wisdom ii, 15–18.

Verse 38. *Two thieves.*—These were public robbers, with which the country was infested, and, as usual, had been reserved to one of the great feasts for execution, that the example might be the more influential. Here too another signal accomplishment of prophecy may be noticed, which is stated by St. Mark: "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors," Isaiah liii, 12. It is remarkable, also, that our Lord, some time before this, applied this prophecy to himself: "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end," Luke xxii, 37.

Verses 39–44. *And they that passed by, &c.*—The crowd of his enemies probably passed in a sort of procession, before the cross, in order to satisfy themselves with a nearer view of his agonies, and to address to him personal insults. They *reviled him*, εβλασφημουν, they blasphemed him, accusing him of various crimes, *wagging their heads*, a usual mark of malevolent derision and exultation; but, in this, unconsciously fulfilling the words of the Psalm above quoted, which prophetically describes the sufferings of Messiah: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head," Psalm xxii, 7. To this sarcastic mockery and contempt was our Saviour exposed from the common people, who taunted him, according to the perverted testimony of the false witnesses on his trial, with his threat of *destroying the temple in three days*, and bade him, if such was his power, to save himself, and if he was *the Son of God, to come down from the cross;* nor could the *chief priests*, and *scribes*, and *elders*, restrain themselves from this brutal mockery, but joined in the insults: but this also was signally overruled for the fulfilment of another portion of the same prophetic Psalm; for in nearly the words of that sacred composition, they said, *He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him*, ει θελει αυτον, "if he regards him," or "delights in him." The words of the Psalm are, "He trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him," verse 8. Thus they themselves undesignedly applied the prophecy to our Lord, and themselves fulfilled it.

For he said, I am the Son of God.—It is to be remarked that the Jews mainly reproach Christ, not with the crime for which he was actually put to death by Pilate, a seditious assertion of sovereignty in opposition to the Roman power, for which, notwithstanding their hypocritical pretence of respect for the rights of Cesar, they would have honoured him; but for the very profession on which their own council had condemned him,—FOR HE SAID, I AM THE SON OF GOD; thus confessing that they had urged upon Pilate a false pretence, and that the ground of their hatred to him was his assumption of a Divine character, and the spirituality of his kingdom.

Cast the same in his teeth.—Reproached him with pretending to a power which he could not execute, joining in the same revilings as the chief priests, elders, and scribes; of which the motive might be to move some compassion as to themselves, by an affected zeal, and to obtain deliverance from death; for instances are on record, in which persons, after having been for some time nailed to the cross and taken down, were by proper care recovered. St. Luke confines this reviling to "one of the malefactors;" to remove which difficulty, some have supposed that both at first joined in these insults, but that one was speedily touched with penitence. This is at least a better solution than that the plural is used for the singular; for the instances of this which are given are not apposite. Another solution is, that St. Matthew, not designing to relate the conversion of the penitent thief, speaks vaguely and generally in a matter on which nothing in his narrative depended; but that St. Luke, relating farther particulars, states the case with designed exactness.

Verse 45. *From the sixth hour there was darkness, &c.*—This darkness was remarkable, from the time when it occurred, which was the passover, which was always celecrated at full moon, so that it could not be occasioned by an eclipse of the sun, and was

darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? that is to say, [m] My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when

[m] Psalm xxii, 1.

therefore preternatural. 2. From its duration, *from the sixth to the ninth hour*, that is, from twelve at noon, to three in the afternoon, whereas an eclipse never continues more than fifteen minutes. 3. From its extent *over all the land*, meaning, probably, not over the whole globe, but over Palestine. References to a preternatural darkness overspreading other countries at this time have been made by both ancient and modern commentators; but they are too vague and unsatisfactory to be depended upon; and if any end had been intended to be answered by this extension of the miracle, Divine Providence would no doubt have taken care that some more certain record should have been preserved of it. This was the first of the miraculous events which accompanied the crucifixion of our Saviour. The great sacrifice for the sins of the world was now offering; and as on great occasions God had been wont to show his acceptance of sacrifices by some visible token, and preternatural phenomena, so on this the greatest, the most solemn, and most important, the Father testifies from heaven that a more than ordinary death was undergoing, to mark which, the sun itself was darkened, and the face of heaven veiled. There was in this also, doubtless, something designedly and strikingly emblematical. The eternal Light of light, who had frequently compared himself to the sun, the natural light of the world, was now undergoing temporary obscuration under the deep cloud of his humiliation, only to shine forth again in his true splendour at his resurrection from the dead.

Verse 46. *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? &c.*—These words are partly Hebrew and partly Chaldee. St. Mark for Ηλι, writes Ελωι; which Grotius takes to have arisen from the gospel of St. Mark, the friend of St. Peter, chiefly being used among the Jewish converts in the Babylonish διασπορα, or dispersion, founded by St. Peter, who had all a language partaking of the Chaldee, and were more used to אלהי. The words are from Psalm xxii, 1: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This exclamation has perplexed those who deny the sacrificial character of the death of Christ, as indicating something of complaint and shrinking from suffering, whereas according to their view of his heroic virtue, he doubtless ought to have gone through the whole scene without complaint. Their refuge from this difficulty is to consider these words as used not as a complaint, but as a mere reference to the prophetic Psalm in which they stand, didactically to show that the whole was a prophecy of him. This end, however, was answered by making these words the vehicle of uttering what must still be considered as an exclamation wrung from his fainting nature by the extremity of anguish. But this was not bodily anguish; for then the malefactors must be considered as superior to Christ in their patience under torture. It was not repining language, that God had so forsaken him as to leave them in the hands of his enemies. It was a deeper anguish which extorted this mournful cry, than that produced by corporal suffering, which the doctrine of the atonement can alone account for, although it is a mystery which none can explain. They are not the words of complaint as implying reluctance to suffer, but as expressive of deep internal agony, internal desertion of sensible support and consolation; in a word, the completion of what was begun in the garden, the drinking of the last dregs of bitterness out of the cup of wrath, when he having placed himself voluntarily in the room and stead of the guilty, was dealt with as though he were really such. Yet was there no distrust in God; for he almost immediately adds, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The Socinian looks only for that magnanimity in Christ which makes him superior to bodily pain: we see all regard to bodily pain absorbed in the deeper sorrows of a pierced spirit, pressed with the weight of human transgression, laid upon him; the effect of which was manifested in this pathetic cry, that we might be convinced that a sinless mind could not suffer thus on its own account, and yet that we might equally witness the strength and majesty of him who could sustain the load, conquer in the awful conflict, maintain his trust in an unparalleled trial, and finally with calmness resign his pure spirit into the hands of God. The peculiar character of Christ's sufferings, and his equally peculiar demeanour under them, are among the strongest presumptive evidences of his VICARIOUS and ATONING death. It is scarcely necessary to say, that in the language of scripture, God is said to FORSAKE any one when he leaves him without aid and comfort.

Verse 47. *This man calleth upon Elias.*—This arose from our Lord's having used the term Eli, "my God." Either the Hellenistic Jews, who were not familiar with the language, mistook the word, or in the crowd some heard indistinctly, or, what is more probable, the whole was a continuance of the

they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, [n] and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the

[n] Psalm lxix, 21.

raillery exercised upon his claim as the Messiah; for a common notion among the Jews was, that Elias would precede the Messiah.

Verses 48, 49. *And put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.*—Jesus had previously said, as we learn from John, "I thirst;" so that this might be an act of relenting compassion in the individaal, who would find the vinegar or *posca* used by the Roman soldiers placed hard by in a vessel, as we learn from the same evangelist. He ran probably to obtain the *reed*, or the *sponge*. But *the rest* seem to have interrupted this act of kindness; for they said, still in the same obdurate spirit, *Let be, let us see whether Elias will come and save him.* St. John says, the sponge was put upon hyssop, meaning the STALK of that herb, which there might be long enough for the purpose, as the crosses were not lofty. This stalk might be called a reed, as καλαμος was used metonymically for *a rod, a staff*, &c.

Verse 50. *When he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*—The words he thus loudly uttered were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," Luke xxiii, 46; and with that *he yielded up the ghost*, αφηκε το πνευμα, "he dismissed his spirit." The notion which has been built upon this form of expression, that our Lord voluntarily hastened his death by an act of his Divine power, dying, not as exhausted by his sufferings, but by cutting them short, is an instance of the liability of critics to be dazzled by a striking thought. If it were so, if our Lord died not as the effect of his crucifixion, but of an exertion of his Divine power, he was not put to death by the Jews, and he did not, as St. Paul says, become "obedient to the death of the cross," although he died upon it. Doddridge, who adopts this view from Theophylact and others, speaks of the majesty and dignity of our Saviour in thus retiring from his sufferings, "dying, if one may so express it, like the Prince of life." This, however, is said in forgetfulness of the inspired declaration that the Jews "killed the Prince of life," not indeed that he killed himself. As for the passage quoted in confirmation of this criticism, "No man taketh away my life from me, but I lay it down of myself," it teaches just the contrary doctrine; not that he would exert his Divine power to prevent men from inflicting death upon him; but that, although possessing that power, he would not exert it, but surrender himself to their will; for to lay down his life was surely to yield up himself to be put to death by his enemies. The truth is, that the meaning of the phrase, he *dismissed* or *gave* up his spirit, is altogether strained to support a notion which, theologically considered, would entail some perplexing consequences. It is no more than a periphrasis for death. A similar phrase is used in the Septuagint to express the death of Rachel, and the Greek writers have numerous examples. Wetstein gives the very words, αφηκε το πνευμα, signifying simply *to die*, from Euripides. So also the Latins: *Animum dimittere, animam reddere*, &c. The early death of our Lord is not, therefore, to be ascribed to his own volition, but to the extremity of his sufferings; the violence of which rather CRUSHED his frame, than allowed him, as the malefactors, to linger on in exhaustion.

Verse 55. *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent, &c.*—This was the second great prodigy which accompanied the crucifixion: for as our Lord expired at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, at the commencement of the offering of the evening sacrifice in the temple, the veil would be rent while the priest was offering incense in the holy place, and the people praying without; and on festivals the number was great; all of whom would be witnesses of the fact, which could not take place without their knowledge. The relation of St. Matthew, therefore, if not true, might have been contradicted by many at the publication of his gospel. If Matthew knew that this veil was rent, all the priests who had access to the ναος, or sanctuary, knew it, and many of the people. If not true, where is the denial of it? Of this we have no record; and no such denial can have been made at the time when this gospel was first published, because the falsification of its statement was so easy, and would have been so fatal to the credit of the whole relation, that the Jews must have contradicted the story had it been in their power. The veil here spoken of was that which separated the sanctuary, where the priests daily officiated, from the holy of holies. It is sometimes called "the second veil;" the first being placed at the porch of the sanctuary, separating that from the court where the people assembled. This second veil was called emphatically, THE VEIL, Το καταπετασμα. And as the rending of it

bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after

opened and exposed the way into this most sacred place, which was the type of heaven, the dwelling place of God, so we are taught by St. Paul to consider this prodigy as emblematical of the effect of the rending of the body of our Lord, in that moment, on the cross, the sacrificial efficacy of which opened, even to the guilty, the way of access to God, and to his glorious presence in a future life, to all that believe. It intimated also the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial law; for while that continued, that free and direct approach to God which is now attained by simple faith in Christ was obstructed by the interposition of imperfect and mystic rites.—These have now given place to a clear revelation of evangelical realities, hopes, and privileges, so that our confiding approach to God is encouraged by all those views which the death of Christ unfolds to the eye of faith. God is our Father; his throne is a throne of grace, his justice is satisfied, and as he is able to show mercy consistently with the rectitude of his government, so he delights in its exercise, and admits the most unworthy, when they are truly penitent and "draw near" with "faith" into the immediate enjoyment of his friendship and blessing.

The earth did quake, and the rocks rent.—Here was a third miracle resulting from the immediate interposition of the Divine power, designed to attest his approbation of the Sufferer, and his anger against his persecutors. The symbolical import of the earthquake was probably the destruction of the Jewish state; for as the rending of the veil intimated the abolition of the religion of the Jews, by the bringing in of a "better hope," and the opening of a "new way" to God, so, as earthquakes in prophetic language signify the subversion of kingdoms, this shaking of the earth was not rhetorical, but a real symbol of those convulsions which should entirely destroy their civil polity and overwhelm them in inevitable destruction. Earthquakes, it is true, occur in the course of events produced by natural causes. Yet even these vast and often destructive commotions of the globe cannot, by any true Christian, be supposed left to themselves, and not to be under both the control and DIRECTION of Providence.—In this case the hand of God was strikingly manifest in the production of this earthquake at the time of our Lord's death, and on the place; leaving, as travellers still observe, marks of an extraordinary convulsion in the fissures and positions of the rocks near the site of the crucifixion.

Verses 52, 53. *And the graves were opened, &c.*—This was the most extraordinary prodigy of all, and the moral is equally obvious: the death of Christ gives life to the very dead, and the first fruits of the general resurrection appear visibly among men! That the earthquake was the instrument employed in opening the sepulchres is clear from the narrative; that it could not give life to the bodies contained in them is certain; so that in this we have another instance of the direct employment of the power of God, marking the death of his Son with such events as never occurred at the death of a mere mortal, or the holiest martyr, or the most useful apostle. The earthquake opened the tombs, which could not be closed again, because the Sabbath was at hand; and in this state they remained until after our Lord himself had risen from the grave: then *many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city*, the current appellation of Jerusalem, though then most unworthy of it, *and appeared unto many.* They rose not before Christ, for he was the "first-born from the dead," and the "first fruits of them that slept;" but they followed as the proof that he was, according to his own profession, "the Resurrection and the Life;" and in fulfilment of his own words, John v, 25, "The hour is coming, and now is," at hand, or near, "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." On this miracle we may remark, 1. That, like the other prodigies, it was manifestly emblematical: it showed that the power of death and the grave was vanquished by the death and resurrection of Christ, and that he had obtained, by his submission to death, "the keys," the supreme dominion, "of death and hades," or the place of separate spirits, whom he commanded to resume their bodies laid down by death, and quickened into life for that purpose. 2. That it is a proof of the Divinity of our Lord; for the life which was imparted to them was given by him, so that to him belong the words ascribed to Jehovah in the Psalms, "For with thee is the fountain of life;" and this doctrine is intimated also by himself in the verse which follows his own prediction of the event, just quoted from John v, 25, "For as the Father hath life IN HIMSELF, so hath he given to the Son to have life IN HIMSELF." 3. That it was a strong confirmation of the resurrection of Christ, vouchsafed probably to some of the disciples to whom our Lord did not himself appear. The witnesses were *many;* they *went into the holy city*, the burial places of the Jews being all without the walls; and *they appeared unto many.* That they were

his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw

the bodies of *saints* but recently deceased may be gathered from this, that their appearing unto those who never knew them could convey no proof of their being raised from the dead; they might be persons assuming the names of those who had long ago died, for any thing the persons who saw them could determine; but by showing themselves to their acquaintance the proof was complete. To the question, "What became of them?" there is no reasonable reply; but that, as our Lord existed in secret until his ascension, so were they also hidden; and that they returned with him to heaven, and are there as the pledges, to angels and to us, that the general resurrection of all the saints shall most certainly take place in the fulness of time. The bodies of these saints, while yet they tarried upon earth, like the body of our Lord, wore not that glorious appearance which his body assumed after or at the ascension, and to the splendour of which the bodies of his people are to be conformed. There were obvious reasons, in each case, for the delay of this "glorification;" but doubtless, like his, their bodies were even then immortal.—That we hear no more of them, indicates that they did not remain among men, and die a second time; which would have been an evil. On this event Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, has a beautiful passage: "He descended into hades, and broke those bars that had hitherto remained firm and untouched, and raised up together with himself those who for many ages had slept. So that, though he came down from heaven alone, he ascended to his Father with a numerous train, and was honourably seated at his right hand."

Verse 54. *Truly this was the Son of God.*—They were witnesses of the darkening of the sun, the tremendous earthquake, the demeanour of Christ, his meekness, his prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies, his conduct to the penitent thief; and though they saw not the veil of the temple rent, they might yet hear of it. The prodigies struck all the soldiers with *fear;* but the centurion, as of a more reflecting character, probably revolved all the circumstances in his thoughts, and at length exclaimed, *Truly this was the Son of God;* and with this testimony the soldiers themselves appear to have consented. According to St. Luke, his words were, "Certainly this was a righteous man." He might, and probably did, use both expressions, as it is not likely that he restrained his strong emotions unto one exclamation; and the one implied the other. If Christ was the Son of God incarnate, he was also a righteous man, innocent of all guilt; and if a righteous man, he was then the Son of God, because he professed himself to be so, which, in the sense in which our Lord used the term, no mere man could profess and be righteous. It has been disputed in what sense the centurion, who was probably a Pagan, and not a proselyte, as some have conjectured, used the term SON OF GOD; but this is clear, that he attributed it to Christ in the same sense in which Christ had claimed it, and in which the Jews had disputed it. This is indubitable. He had probably heard that Christ had been condemned in the Jewish council, on a charge of blasphemy, because he said, I am the Son of God;" and he had certainly heard the Jews who insulted him in his sufferings taunt him with this profession, which according to them was blasphemy, or it could have been no crime. He knew, therefore, that it was a title implying a claim to a participation of the Divine nature, the nature of that one supreme God whom, as a man of education, he could not but know the Jews alone worshipped, to the exclusion of all belief in the existence of all inferior, subordinate deities. It follows, therefore, that it must have been with reference to this claim, as understood by the Jews, and not with reference to any of the idolatrous notions of Paganism, that he was convinced that God himself was the author of all these prodigies, and that they were all attestations in favour of the sufferer, or the exertions of his own power, and that he therefore acknowledged him emphatically to be that Son of God which the Jews denied. This is plain, not from the use of the mere phrase itself; but from the adverb *αληθως, truly, certainly, indubitably*, this *was the Son of God*, in manifest opposition to the criminality affixed by the Jews to his assumption of that title.

But the phrase used being *υιος Θεου*, without the article, some would render *a son of God;* an expression, they think, suitable in the lips of a polytheist; but when the disciples in the ship, after Christ had quelled the storm, came to him and worshipped him, and said, "Truly thou art the Son of God," the article is wanting, and yet they, being Jews, cannot be charged with polytheistic notions; and even a Socinian critic has acknowledged that the phrases *υιος Θεου*, and *ο υιος του Θεου*, or *υιος του Θεου*, mean exactly the same thing. As the centurion used the phrase "Son of God" with reference to what Christ had professed himself to be, so he adds what is recorded by St. Luke, "Certainly this was a righteous or just man," probably with reference to the message of Pilate's wife, which being delivered to him "on the judgment seat," might be known to others. She

the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 ° When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and

° Mark xv, 42; Luke xxiii, 50; John xix, 38.

had said, "Have thou nothing to do with that JUST MAN;" and the centurion exclaims, "Truly this was a just man."

If not precisely the same, yet a powerful effect was produced by the extraordinary events which occurred. Against the impression of the darkness many of the obdurate spectators of the crucifixion, buoyed up, it may be, by the effrontery of the chief priests, and scribes, and elders, maintained an indomitable stubbornness, and continued their mocking of our Lord; but the repetition of these "mighty signs" at length broke down the resolution of the multitude; for it is added by St. Luke, in connection with the confession of the centurion, "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned," Luke xxiii, 48.

Verses 55, 56. *And many women were there, &c.*—These heroic women appear to have been the only disciples, except John, present at the crucifixion. They had followed him out of Galilee, and some of them were in opulent circumstances; they *ministered* to him, and by their grateful benevolence he appears to have been chiefly supported during the later period of his ministry. So dependent did the Lord of all voluntarily render himself! These beheld *afar off*, as prevented by delicacy or fear from mingling with the multitude. The mother of Jesus stood by the cross, with John; she being, no doubt, treated with some respect from natural pity, and John being regarded in the light of her protector. Encouraged by the presence of these two, some of *these women* who at first stood at a distance, seem afterward to have approached nearer: of these was *Mary Magdalene*, or Mary of Magdala, a respectable woman, out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils, whose power over her was her affliction, not crime; at least the notion that she had been an impure woman has no foundation in what is recorded of her. This notion appears to have arisen from confounding her with the woman who was "a sinner," but whose name is not mentioned. *The mother of Zebedee's children* was Salome.

Verses 57–60. *And when even was come.*—The Jews had two evenings, one from three o'clock P. M., or the ninth hour, till sunset, the other from sunset until dark. The evening here mentioned was the second evening. The phrase here used means that this second evening, when the Sabbath began, was at hand, was fast approaching, before which the bodies must be taken down, and, if not dead, despatched by breaking their bones, that they might be buried at the foot of the cross, in the Golgotha on which they were executed. This Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, or Ramathaim, as the Hebrews named it, the birthplace of Samuel, is said to have been *a disciple of Jesus*, but secretly, "for fear of the Jews." He is called "a counsellor," as being a member of the sanhedrim; but as "a good man and just," the still more honourable appellations given him by St. Luke, had "not consented to the counsel and deed of them." His former timidity had probably been removed by the prodigies of our Lord's death working in him a still stronger conviction that Jesus was the Messiah; and he now avowed himself a friend of Christ by going to Pilate, and *begging the body of Jesus* for interment. He the more easily prevailed, no doubt, on account of his riches and rank; but hereby was fulfilled another signal prophecy, Isaiah liii, 9: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with THE RICH in his death," or, as Lowth translates, "And his grave was appointed with the wicked; but with the rich was his tomb:" that is, he was appointed to be buried as well as the malefactors, but with this remarkable distinction, that his tomb should be with the rich man; which was accomplished when Joseph *laid him in his own new tomb*, "wherein never man was laid." This tomb was *hewn out in the rock:* the Jewish sepulchres were frequently caves hollowed out of the rocks with which the country abounded. Joseph's tomb was near; and the time before the commencement of the Sabbath being short, the body, wrapped in clean linen with a costly mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight, was hastily deposited in the cave, and a great stone was rolled against the entrance; more complete embalming of

he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

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the body being reserved until after the Sabbath. In this pious work Nicodemus was also assisting, and thus with Joseph nobly avowed his faith in Christ; and yet neither they nor the women had any idea of his rising again, as appears from the preparations made for a regular embalmment of the body. Was it that they understood all that our Lord had so plainly declared respecting his resurrection in a figurative sense? This is probable; and how and when he, whom they still believed, though put to death, to be the Messiah, was again to manifest himself, they appear to have left to God, without any settled opinion, or perhaps conjecture. One thing was, however, before them,—to show respect to their despised Master; and in this duty they failed not: though their faith was confused and unsettled, yet their love was strong. But the very circumstance of the care of these truly sincere disciples to pay all funeral honours to their Lord, even to embalming, is an incident of great importance in the evidence of the truth of the resurrection; for those who made such anxious preparations for the regular embalming of the body as soon as the Sabbath should be over, and evidently anticipated that he would continue to lie in the grave, could have been no parties to a plot for taking away the body in the night. This is one of those powerful evidences of the veracity of the Gospel which so frequently occur without any design on the part of the writers of these narratives, and so unequivocally stamp them with TRUTH. The linen cloth, *σινδων*, in which Joseph wrapped the body of Christ, was a square sheet, in which the body was bound up with swathes or bandages. The stones placed at the mouths of sepulchres were large and weighty, designed to defend the bodies laid in the cave within from beasts of prey, and from other intrusion. Hence Matthew says the stone was *rolled*, indicating the weight, which was done by those who assisted Joseph in carrying away the body and bearing it to the tomb, who were probably his own servants.

Verse 61. *Sitting over against the sepulchre.*—Sitting was the posture of mourners; and in this character these pious women attended the interment. In this again they professed their belief in his innocence; for the Jews are forbidden to show any external marks of mourning at the burial of malefactors. They might "grieve in the heart," but not "mourn." That the women retired immediately after the interment, appears from their going into the city to provide the spices for the proper embalming of the body; for sunset, when the Sabbath commenced, was just at hand.

Verse 62. *The next day that followed the preparation, &c.*—The *preparation* was the day before the Sabbath, so called because they prepared every thing requisite for the Sabbath. It was sometimes called *προσαββαΐον*. The *next day* was therefore the Sabbath itself; not the following morning, as we should say, but immediately after six o'clock the same evening, when the Sabbath commenced. A night did not elapse, as might appear from our mode of computing time, before the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate to urge him to set a guard upon the tomb, for then it would have been left many hours unguarded; but as our Lord was buried just on the eve of the commencement of the Sabbath, that is, close upon six o'clock in the evening of Friday, they would go almost immediately to Pilate, before the darkness had set in, which would have been favourable to the removal of the body. They intruded indeed somewhat upon the Sabbath, which had commenced before they reached Pilate; but though they might not employ themselves in any business on the Sabbath, they made no scruple of requiring the Romans to do so, or they might conclude that the importance of the case created a lawful necessity.

Verse 63. *That deceiver.*—The word is highly opprobrious, and signifies an *impostor* and *vagabond*.

After three days I will rise again.—Our Lord does not appear to have explicitly conversed with any but his disciples on the subject of his resurrection; so that the chief priests probably concluded that he had professed that he would rise again *after three days*, that is, according to the Jewish mode of speaking, on *the third day*, verse 64, from his having publicly said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I raise it up again;" and thus these base hypocrites showed that they well enough knew that in these words

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

he did not threaten the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, the interpretation which they forced upon them at his trial.

Verse 65. *Ye have a watch.*—The κουστωδια consisted of sixty soldiers. These were Roman soldiers, as the term used, which is the Latin *custodia*, shows, as well as other circumstances. But they hereby unwittingly mightily strengthened the evidence of the resurrection; not only by adding sixty independent witnesses to the number, but by making it certain that sixty men could not all at once be asleep on guard, and that a feeble band of disciples could not overcome sixty armed and disciplined men. The word used by Pilate admits of being taken either in the indicative or imperative. The latter is to be preferred; for if they had had a guard at their disposal already, they need not have applied to the governor. The sense therefore is, "Take a guard."

Verse 66. *Sealing the stone.*—This custom is mentioned in Daniel vi, 17: "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet." The seal used in this case was either that of Pilate or some public seal, so that the stone could not be removed but by the authority which the seal represented. The seal would be so fixed as that the stone could not be moved out of its place without breaking it. For this purpose a band of leather or cord was in such cases used, to each end of which the seal was attached.

The enemies of our Lord had now completed their plot against the Lord's anointed: they had obtained his blood; silenced his reproving voice; seen him laid in the sepulchre; secured the stone at its entrance by a seal; placed over it a numerous guard of soldiers; and one thing only seemed wanting to complete their triumph, and that they no doubt eagerly anticipated,—to throw open the tomb on the third day, bring forth the body, and prove to all the people that he was "a deceiver." How truly then did the resurrection of the rejected and persecuted Saviour illustrate the words of their own Psalm, addressed to all the enemies of Messiah, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision!" The next and concluding chapter of this gospel narrates this event, the grand foundation of the Christian faith. The accounts of the four evangelists present some apparent discrepancies, which, however, but more strongly mark their veracity as witnesses. The manner in which they are to be harmonized will be stated at the conclusion of the notes upon the gospel of St. John.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women. 9 He himself appeareth unto them. 11 The high priests give the soldiers money to say that he was stolen out of his sepulchre. 16 Christ appeareth to his disciples, 19 and sendeth them to baptize and teach all nations.

1 In the [a] end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

[a] Mark xvi, 1; John xx, 1.

CHAPTER XXVIII. Verse 1. *In the end of the Sabbath, &c.*—Οψε, with a genitive, signifies any past time; so that the words denote "after the Sabbath," or, as St. Mark has it, "when the Sabbath was past," which concluded at six o'clock on the Saturday evening. Sabbath here may, however, signify the week; for σαββατων in the plural is used for a week, which closed with the proper Sabbath or seventh day: so that σαββατων in the first clause of the sentence, will have the same signification as in the second; μια σαββατωμ being the first day of the week,—the Jews calling the first, second, &c., days, the first, second, &c., of the Sabbath. The time when the two Marys came to see the sepulchre was *as it began to dawn toward*, or into, *the first day of the week;* which is explained by St. Luke to be "very early in the morning," and by St. Mark, "at the rising of the sun." The object of their visit was to complete the embalming of the body, for which purpose they brought "sweet spices." St. Mark adds Salome to Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James. Joanna and "other women" also joined them, as we learn from St. Luke; so strongly intent were all these female disciples to pay their final respect to their Lord, and perform the last sad offices of sacred friendship and duty. In the sepulchres of persons of superior rank among the

2 And, behold, there *was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the woman, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

* Or, *had been*.

Jews, there was first, says Lightfoot, a square floor within the cave, and on each side, deeper than the floor, caves to deposit the bodies.

Verse 2. *A great earthquake.*—Not after they arrived, but before; by which, and by the appearance of the angel, the soldiers of the guard had become as dead men. This great concussion of the earth was probably confined to the neighbourhood of the tomb.

Verse 3. *Like lightning.*—Of intense brightness, heightened by the snowy whiteness of his *raiment*. The word rendered *countenance* signifies *form* or *aspect*.

Verse 6. *He is risen, as he said.*—They had gone to the sepulchre perplexed who should roll away the stone, being ignorant both of its being sealed, and of a guard being set over it; but now they find the stone removed, see the angel sitting upon it, are saluted by him with encouraging words, and hear Christ's actual resurrection announced. Yet this was not done without mild reproof: *he is risen*, AS HE SAID,—words of their Lord which they ought to have remembered and believed.

Come, see the place, &c.—They are invited into the area within the cave, that they may see the place, the cell below its level, where the Lord had been laid. See note on verse 1. Maundrell has an illustrative passage in describing a sepulchre, near the ancient Arphad: "The chamber is eight feet broad and ten long. In it are seven CELLS for corpses hewn out of the firm rock."

Verse 7. *He goeth before you into Galilee.*—There he had many disciples, and designed to make the most public manifestation of himself, and did appear "to five hundred brethren at once." This message, as it has been well remarked, was sent to all the disciples then at Jerusalem, the greater part of whom were from Galilee, celebrating the passover in that city. To so many of them he did not intend, at that time, to appear; but only to a select few and the apostles, which he did that evening.

Verse 8. *Fear and great joy.*—Fear produced by the presence of so illustrious a supernatural being, and joy at the news he had announced. They "trembled," says St. Mark, "were amazed, and sore afraid:" yet though women, not as the guards, who had become *as dead*; these emotions being restrained by the friendly aspect and voice of the heavenly visitant.

Verse 10. *All hail.*—A word of friendly and affectionate salutation. The Syriac has, "Peace be unto you."

Held him by the feet.—An action which expressed the deepest reverence, mingled with the strongest affection. By embracing his feet they were also assured that it was not a phantom which they beheld, but the body of the real Jesus.

And worshipped him.—Although the original word will not of itself prove that this was an act of Divine worship, who can reasonably doubt it when his resurrection had indeed demonstrated him to be the SON OF GOD, a title to which all the Jews attached ideas of Divinity? Nor did Jesus, after his resurrection, prescribe that proper worship which we know the disciples publicly and constantly paid to him after his ascension; because it followed of course from his being thus proved to be what he had professed, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

Verse 11. *Some of the watch came into the city.*—It may be remarked that St. Matthew states only the leading facts of the resurrection, and a few only of the appearances of Jesus afterward, and these briefly; his main object being to refute the tale circulated respecting the stealing of the body

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him *away* while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

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of Jesus which he now introduces. He gives all that is necessary to establish the facts, and to show that he was acquainted with the manner in which the slanderous attempt to account for the absence of our Lord from the tomb originated. This having been sufficiently done by him, the other evangelists record other particulars; for all the gospels have respect to each other.

How long it was before the soldiers of the Roman guard recovered from that overwhelming terror, which probably dispersed them, and overcame for a time their faculties, does not appear. It would seem, however, that some time did elapse before they came into the city, and that then they arrived in scattered companies: *Some of the watch came into the city, &c.*

Verse 12. *When they were assembled, and had taken counsel.*—The absurd fiction which was invented was therefore the work of the sanhedrim or great council, the same that had condemned our Lord. Their incredulity and obduracy are indeed astonishing; but scarcely more so than that they had all along manifested; and we must take into account that they were men judicially given up by God to the blind and malevolent passions of their own bad hearts. That they were guilty of both a wicked and a clumsy fiction is seen from this, that afterward they manifestly appear to have been ashamed of avowing it, and that it was adopted in haste as a temporary expedient. Of this we have a striking, though an incidental proof in the words of Gamaliel, in this very council, who, when Peter and the other apostles were brought before them for preaching the very fact of Christ's resurrection, and they were disposed to put them to death, said, "If this counsel and work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it," Acts v, 38, 39;—words which presupposed that the resurrection might be true, and which could not have been uttered had the council continued to maintain the story they taught to the Roman soldiers. Still, it was something that they had originated, a tale which ignorance and prejudice made long current among the vulgar; for the evangelist adds, *And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews to this day.* Unwilling to believe so clearly a demonstrated truth, like all those who love error, they were given up "to believe a lie," the absurdities of which they obstinately overlooked. For, as the obvious remark has been often made, if the whole sixty soldiers slept, how should they know how the body was taken away? if only a part of them, they would alarm the rest; and if the whole were awake, their force was sufficient to resist the attempt. Yet infidels, and infidel Biblical critics too, of the present time, believe equal absurdities in framing theories to refute or to explain away "the supernaturalism," as it is called, of the Holy Scriptures. Thus human nature, in all ages, is true to itself; and the objections which have been urged against the miracles and the resurrection of Christ, from the very unbelief of the Jews of the same, are solved by the moral phenomena which the human heart in every age exhibits.

Verse 14. *Persuade him.*—Conciliate or appease him; because it was death for the sentinel to sleep upon his post.

Verse 16. *Went away to Galilee.*—Not immediately, but some time after; the brevity of St. Matthew omitting the intermediate appearances of Christ, as recorded by the other evangelists.

Verse 17. *Some doubted.*—Not of the apostles, but of the disciples then with them; for now our Lord fulfilled his promise, to appear to his disciples generally in Galilee; and this was probably the time when he was seen of "the five hundred brethren at once." They doubted whether it was he, when he first appeared; but when *he came and spake to them*, as it follows in the next verse, they doubted no longer.

Verse 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*—Our Lord's dominion therefore comprehends angels, men, and devils. "All things are put under him," saving, as St. Paul observes, "that he is excepted which did put all things under him." Every *creature*, through the wide realms of space, is subjected to the rule of THE GOD-MAN MEDIATOR; all are made subservient to the working out of his grand design, the restoration of our world from sin and misery,

19 ¶ [b] Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

[b] St. Mark, chap. xvi, 15.

rendered wretched by sin; and the manifestation, through successive ages, of his own rectoral justice, boundless mercy, and infinite wisdom. And this his authority shall, in the fulness of time, be acknowledged even by those who have most rebelliously struggled against it. By the conquests of GRACE or POWER all shall be subdued, "that at his name every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii, 10, 11.

Verse 19. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, &c.*—The connection of these words with the foregoing is highly important. Go ye THEREFORE; that is, Because I have all power in heaven and earth, *go ye and teach all nations*, "preach the Gospel to every creature," Mark xvi, 15; for to me belongs the RIGHT to command their faith and obedience, and to prescribe the terms of their reconciliation to God; and I have POWER to bless and to save, to condemn and to punish. Nor was this declaration of Christ's universal and unlimited dominion less encouraging to those who were to be sent on so hazardous an enterprise. It was their faith in his power which sustained them; in that they confided to give efficacy to their ministry; and resting on that, they defied their enemies. It was a motive which appealed to their deepest fears and to their highest hopes; they feared not them that could kill the body, but Him who had power to cast both body and soul into hell, if they proved false to their trust; and they placed their joyful hope in one who had equal power to raise his faithful servants above death and the grave, and to crown them with immortality and eternal life.

Verse 19. *Teach all nations.*—Make disciples of all nations; which means, instruct them in the faith, and persuade them to the belief and reception of it; for how else should men be made disciples but by instructing them in the doctrine held out to their acceptance?

Baptizing them, &c.—So that instruction as to those capable of it, which is manifestly implied, must precede baptism; this being a rational ordinance to be submitted to on knowledge and conviction, and not that to which it has often been debased, something little better than a superstitious charm and ceremony.

On this great rite it may be remarked, 1. That it is of universal obligation; all who are made disciples are to be baptized. 2. That it is designed as a public profession of faith in the trinity in unity; that is, in the Deity as revealed in the Holy Scriptures; the doctrine of which, that there is one Divine essence, and that "in the unity of this Godhead there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" which profession of faith is also an acknowledgment of their various rights, relations, and offices, and of entire submission to them. 3. That it is the initiatory rite by which we enter the covenant of grace. The old covenant had circumcision for its initiatory rite; and if Christian baptism is not to be regarded as taking its place, then has this new and better covenant no initiatory rite at all, since the Lord's supper is not initiatory, but of regular and habitual observance. But as the entrance into the Jewish Church was by circumcision, so the entrance into the Christian Church is by baptism. Hence its administration is here prescribed to those who are made disciples, and as such disposed to become formally the members of Christ's Church. Hence it derives its federal or covenant character, and is rightly considered as a mystery or sacrament. Of the blessings of this covenant it is the SIGN, holding forth the washing away of sin, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost; and it is the SEAL, inasmuch as, being administered under the command of Christ, it is a constant PLEDGE of his unchangeably gracious intentions to those that believe and are baptized; while our submission to this rite is that act by which we accept and make ourselves parties to this covenant of grace and salvation, claiming its blessings, and binding ourselves to fulfil its conditions. 4. The rite of baptism, instituted by Christ, differs both from that of John and that which was administered by the disciples of Jesus before his resurrection. John baptized into a belief of the speedy appearing of Messiah; the disciples in the name of Jesus, which was a profession of faith in him as the Messiah; but the rite as instituted by our Lord, was baptism in the name, into the name, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—into the belief and worship of the triune God as above stated, including faith in the incarnation and offices of the Son, and the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit. All these are the objects of distinct profession, and where these are not acknowledged there can be no truly Christian baptism; men stumble at the very threshold, and cannot enter into the Church of God and covenant of grace. 5. Baptism is therefore a standing testimony to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the offices of each person in the economy of redemption. the *name* is ONE, not *names*; the *persons*,

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

THREE, each of whom is manifestly represented as coequal, because the common objects of trust, obedience, and worship, and the source of blessing. Thus is the absolute unity and the Divine character of that sacred Three unequivocally marked, in a rite by which they become our ONE and ONLY God, and we become HIS people.

It has been questioned whether these words prescribe the *formula* to be used in baptism, or merely express the end and intention of the rite. If the former, the latter is necessarily included in it as its reason; but should the latter only have been intended by our Lord, yet when used as *a formula*, they do no more than audibly declare the real import of the rite, which is never truly performed but when the trinity in unity, with the relations and glories of each of the three persons as revealed in the Scriptures, is acknowledged. Nothing therefore can be so proper as the use of words which publicly declare the intention of the rite; and it may be traced up to the first ages of the Christian Church. Arguments for and against the baptism of infants have been deduced from these words. "How," say some, "are all nations to be baptized, if children are to be excluded?" "How," says the antipædo-baptist, "should children be included, if baptism is to follow *instruction* and *believing?*" The truth is, that adults could only be spoken of in the text; and the right of the children of believers rests on other grounds, and may be sufficiently established by them.

Verse 20. *Teaching them to observe, &c.*—To make disciples implies, as above observed, *teaching*, in order to knowledge and faith; but this is elementary teaching, and is not intended to supersede the more copious and constant teaching which is to succeed baptism. A stronger word, διδασκω, is therefore used; and the object of this patient and official instruction assigned to ministers is, to lead the baptized to OBSERVE *all things whatsoever I have commanded you*,—to practise universal obedience without separating one duty from another, and to do this perseveringly to the end of life. Thus we have the threefold end of the Christian ministry, to convert men to the faith, by making them disciples of Christ, to bring them to a public profession and cordial reception of it by baptism, and to train them up to the practice of universal holiness, as their preparation for heaven.

And, lo, I am with you, &c.—As no men had so high a work assigned them as the conversion and sanctification of men, so these words reminded them of two great truths: that it was not a work of man but of God, so that the Divine invisible presence of Christ with them was necessary to their success; and also that his presence should be ever with his faithful ministers both to aid and comfort them, and to give efficacy to their labours.

Alway.—Πασας τας ημερας, *all the days*, that is daily, or constantly, without interruption.

Unto the end of the world.—Unto the consummation of all things; which shows that the ministry was to be perpetuated throughout all time, and that the words of Christ in these verses were not addressed to the apostles only, but to their successors throughout all full ages.

Amen.—This was either added by Christ in confirmation of his promise, or by the evangelist to express his joyful concurrence and earnest wish.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK.

St. Mark was the son of Mary, a disciple resident at Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and first Christians often assembled. He is mentioned in 1 Peter v, 13, where the apostle calls him "Marcus my son." There seems little reason for doubting that he was the John Mark of Jerusalem, who travelled for awhile as the companion of Paul and Barnabas, and who incurred the displeasure of the former for having left them before the whole tour they proposed was completed. Upon the separation of Paul and Barnabas, on his account, Mark travelled with the latter. That it was nothing which affected the personal or ministerial character of Mark which occasioned this dispute, and St. Paul's refusal to have him as a companion on a second tour, may be gathered from the honourable mention made of him by that apostle in 2 Tim. iv, 11: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." He finally attached himself to St. Peter, with whom he continued until the death of that apostle. After he had written his gospel, which was done while he was the companion of St. Peter, he is said by Eusebius and Jerome to have laboured in Egypt, and planted the celebrated Church of Alexandria. It was so certainly admitted in the earliest times that Mark wrote his gospel under the eye of St. Peter, that among the primitive Christians it was known as familiarly by the name of the gospel of St. Peter as the gospel of St. Mark. Although this gospel was composed at Rome, the notion of some, that it was written in Latin, is not sustained by sufficient evidence. No ancient author ever affirmed this; and the testimony is uniform that it was written in Greek, the only language which then had any pretence to be universal. That it was designed for the Gentile, not Jewish converts only, is clear from the explanation he subjoins to words and customs which to Jews were sufficiently familiar. Critics have discovered in it many Latinisms; which may be accounted for from Mark having long lived at Rome, and no doubt speaking the Latin tongue.

That the gospel which bears the name of St. Mark was in reality written by him, the testimony of antiquity is uniform and decisive; and equally so, that, if he was not the amanuensis of St. Peter, he acted at his suggestion, and embodied his relations of the facts of the history of our Lord, as he had heard them stated by him, and under the inspiration of the same Spirit. Whether he published his gospel before the death of St. Peter, or only collected the materials, and completed the work after the martyrdom of that apostle, is uncertain. This renders the exact time of its publication a matter of conjecture; but it is evident, from his concluding words, that it was not till after the apostles had left Judea, and had dispersed "everywhere preaching the word." The date may be fixed at from A. D. 60, to A. D. 63.

Notwithstanding the strong similarity of the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, in many parts, there is no reason to doubt that the latter is not strictly an original work. St. Mark is often more copious and circumstantial

than St. Matthew, and sometimes much less so, while he introduces several entirely new circumstances and narrations.

The longer discourses of Christ are generally omitted; and the whole may be considered in the light, not of a perfect gospel,—for that is the character of none of them taken separately, and the perfection lies in the COLLECTION of the four,—but as a compendium of the stupendous works of the Divine Founder of our religion, and as a most convincing manual of its evidences, as founded upon the character, actions, and miracles of its Author. See the Introduction to St. Matthew's Gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

CHAPTER I.

1 The office of John the Baptist. 9 Jesus is baptized, 12 tempted, 14 he preacheth: 16 calleth Peter, Andrew, James, and John: 23 healeth one that had a devil, 29 Peter's mother-in-law, 32 many diseased persons, 41 and cleanseth the leper.

1 THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, [a] Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 [b] The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 [c] John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance * for the remission of sins.

5 [d] And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was [e] clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 [f] And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens † opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 [g] And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness

[a] Mal. iii, 1.—[b] Isaiah xl, 3; Luke iii, 4; John i, 23. [c] Matt. iii, 1.—* Or, *unto*. [d] Matt. iii, 5.—[e] Matt. iii, 4.—[f] Matt. iii, 13. † Or, *cloven*, or, *rent*.—[g] Matt. iv, 1.

CHAPTER I. Verse 1. *The beginning of the Gospel, &c.*—This may either be regarded as a short title to the book, after the manner of some ancient writers; or it may be joined with what follows, and so the sense will be, that the Gospel, the publication, the κηρυγμα of Christ's advent, office, and glorious ministry, commenced with the ministry of John Baptist, according to the prophets. The latter view makes the construction elliptical and somewhat harsh; but this is rather the character of St. Mark's style. And as it was his design to begin his account of Christ with his public ministry, so he could not more happily introduce it than by bringing in his forerunner John, announcing his advent, preparing his way, and surrendering his own disciples to his superior tuition and authority. This was indeed "the beginning of the Gospel:" John the herald sounded the trumpet publicly before his royal Master, the Prince of peace, the Redeemer God.

Verse 2. *In the prophets.*—Some MSS. and versions read, "In Esaias the prophet," but the connection appears to determine the point in favour of the received text; for the evangelist immediately produces quotations from *two* of the prophets, Malachi and Isaiah. See note on Matt. xi, 10.

Verse 3. *Prepare ye the way, &c.*—See note on Matt. iii, 3.

Verse 4. *The wilderness.*—The wildernesses of Palestine lay often contiguous to populous cities and districts, and were often indeed interspersed with them. This wilderness lay along the Jordan.

Baptism of repentance.—The meaning is, that the Baptist enforced repentance, and baptism as a sign and proof of it; and both had respect to *the remission of sins*, for which, however, his dispensation made no new provision, gave in fact no new promise, but the penitents were referred to him that was to *come after* John, him *mightier than himself*, who should baptize them *with the Holy Ghost*. See the notes on the whole of the third chapter of St. Matthew.

Verse 6. *A girdle of a skin.*—That is, a leathern girdle.

Verses 12, 13. *And immediately the Spirit driveth him, &c.*—See notes on Matt. iv 1–11

forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

14 [h] Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

16 [i] Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 [k] And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 [l] And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

23 [m] And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have

[h] Matt. iv, 12.—[i] Matt. iv, 18.

[k] Matt. iv, 13.—[l] Matt. vii, 28.—[m] Luke iv, 33.

And was with the wild beasts.—This circumstance is not mentioned by Matthew.—It shows that the wilderness was not like that in which John came preaching, contiguous to towns and villages; but a distant and rude solitude, far from the abodes of men.

Verse 15. *The time is fulfilled.*—The time here mentioned is that spoken of by the prophets, or that which had been foreappointed in the Divine mind, whether considered as having been particularly revealed or not. Sufficient notes of time are found in the prophets, and especially in Daniel, to prove that the Messiah was to appear at the time when our Lord assumed that character; but it is more probable that in this place our Lord refers to the course of the successive dispensations, all of which had their appointed periods of time to fulfil, the patriarchal, the prophetic, and finally that of John the Baptist, at the close of which his own was to commence, never to give place to any other. Now John had fulfilled his great office, *he was put in prison*, and could no longer bear testimony to Christ, or act as his precursor; and *the time* was therefore *accomplished* for Christ to enter more fully and publicly upon his great office as eminently, and above all others, THE TEACHER SENT FROM GOD. This mighty ministry he commenced in Galilee, and filled that whole region with the news of salvation and the fame of his stupendous miracles. See notes on Matt. iv, 12–25.

Verse 16. *Simon and Andrew, &c.*—See note on Matt. iv, 18.

Verse 22. *They were astonished at his doctrine, &c.*—This was also the effect produced upon the multitude after hearing the sermon on the mount; and they also contrasted his teaching with that of the scribes, as possessing *authority*. It would appear from this that our Lord had delivered a lengthened discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, in which he probably refuted the prevalent traditions of the scribes, placed the law of God in the light of its primitive purity, and enforced his own expositions with such direct reference to his AUTHORITY as to intimate that his was not merely HUMAN instruction, but that he was the great Lawgiver himself. See on this point the notes on Matt. vii, 28, 29.

Verse 23. *A man with an unclean spirit.*—The notable miracle was wrought by our Lord in the same synagogue in which he had so spoken as to astonish his hearers, and to impress them with the *authority* of his wisdom and dignity. It was designed to give force to the important doctrines which he had been teaching, and to show them that his *authority* was not an affectation, but real and inherent. He not only SPOKE miracles, but performed them. Several things are remarkable in the case here recorded. 1. The cry of terror set up by the demon, or rather demons, for one seems to have had others under him, in whose name as well as his own he speaks, using the plural: *Let us alone; what have we to do with thee?* Ea is an exclamation of indignation or grief, from the Hebrew הוֹ, and may be here rendered *Alas! art thou come to destroy us?* Thus, as in other instances, these wretched spirits showed that they were in a hopeless condition, and had only "a fearful looking for of fiery indignation" before them. The advocates for the redemption of devils will scarcely be able to reconcile this fact to their theory. Not one of the evil spirits whom Christ met with during his ministry was inspired with any hope in him as a Saviour; but uniformly regarded him as their

we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

29 [n] And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many

[n] St. Matthew, chap. viii, 14.

inexorable Judge, showed the utmost terror of his presence, and expected "a time" when he would fully execute judgment upon them. 2. The testimony borne by this evil spirit to the character of Jesus: "*I know* thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." This title the devil learned from the Old Testament. "The most holy" is an appellation of Christ in Daniel ix, 24, "to anoint the most Holy," which the Jew Aben Ezra applies to the Messiah; and holiness in its highest sense as an essential attribute of Divinity is ascribed to him, by adoring seraphs, in that glorious vision in which "Esaias spoke of him and saw his glory." Holiness is the eminent characteristic of Messiah as he is God; as through a spotless incarnation he was the grand sacrifice for sin; as his own pure nature was the model to which all that believe in him are to be renewed by the transforming power of his grace, and as he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Very naturally did this wretched demon fix upon this title and character of the Messiah; for it is the holiness of Christ which invests him with terrors to all the wicked, whether men or devils. 3. Our Lord silences the fiend, as not willing to receive a testimony from so impure a source, but he suffers him to show his tremendous power over the possessed. He tore him; yet, as St. Luke says, "He hurt him not," we must understand that the effect of all those contortions into which he was thrown, was specially counteracted, so that no material injury was the result. This was permitted in order to render the miracle more illustrious and convincing; and then, at a word, our Lord ejected him. 4. The effect produced is expressed in a manner the most artless, yet so natural and moving, that one seems almost insensibly to feel present with the assembly in the synagogue, and to partake of their emotions: *They were all amazed*, so that *they questioned among themselves*, they solicited each other's opinions in eager inquiries for a solution of so extraordinary a case, saying, *What thing is this, what new doctrine*, διδαχη, *teaching*, or mode of teaching, is *this? for with authority*, και' εξουσιαν, with self-derived authority, *commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.* That they were astonished, not merely at the fact of the casting out of the demon, but at the peculiar manner, as marked with peculiar *authoritativeness*, is also clear from the parrallel passage in St. Luke: "And they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth," &c. As in his preaching he referred not, like the scribes, to human authority, nor appeared as a mere interpreter of law, but spoke from an authority in himself; so here he cast not out demons, like the Jewish exorcists, by appealing to the name of another, by any distinct act of reference to superior power, but he spoke authoritatively as from himself, and the effect followed: He *commandeth, and they obey him.* This was the particular which excited the astonishment of the synagogue, and produced all those eager inquiries as to the reason and true solution of so strange a case; from which it indubitably follows that our Lord placed himself, in the MANNER of working his miracles, above all mere men, above the greatest prophets themselves, and that in the midst of his humility and lowliness as to any thing which did not respect his office. That he was God and man, is the only solution of which this particular is capable.

Verse 30. *Simon's wife's mother.*—See note on Matt. viii, 14.

devils; and suffered not the devils * to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40 [o] And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 [p] But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

* Or, *to say that they knew him.*—[o] Matt. viii, 2.

[p] Luke v, 15.

Verse 34. *And cast out many devils.*—These great miracles, wrought in the evening after the Sabbath had closed, are mentioned Matt. viii, 16, &c., where see the notes. Here St. Mark adds, *and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him;* or, permitted them not to declare that they knew him, that is, to be not merely the Messiah, but a being of superior nature, even the Son, the Holy One of God. Several began to make this confession, and he then imposed silence upon them. And the true reason must have been, not that he objected to their declaring him to be the Messiah,—for John had pointed him out under that character, and our Lord from the first assumed it,—but that the very devils knew that he was a DIVINE PERSON, and the publication of this he chose to reserve in his own hands, to be revealed to his immediate disciples first, and then, through them, to the world. He even, at a subsequent period, forbade his apostles to tell all they believed respecting him, reserving that to a time when they should be fully qualified to state and defend so glorious a truth. See the note on Matt. xvi, 20.

Verse 38. *The next town.*—Τας εχομενας κωμοπολεις, adjoining towns. These were towns or villages with a synagogue. They held the middle rank between cities and villages, strictly so called.

Verse 40. *And there came a leper to him.*—See the notes on Matt. viii, 2–4.

Verse 45. *Insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, &c.*—These are incidents which show the astonishing impression made by the early ministry of our Lord. When he entered the city to go to his house, he was obliged to do it privately; when he went out of the city in order to obtain any privacy, he was obliged to seek *desert* or unfrequented *places;* yet even there *they came to him from every quarter*, whenever they could discover his retreats.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Christ healeth one sick of the palsy,* 14 *calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,* 15 *eateth with publicans and sinners,* 18 *excuseth his disciples for not fasting,* 23 *and for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day.*

1 AND again [a] he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them,* no, not so much as

[a] St. Matthew, chap. ix, 1.

CHAPTER II. Verses 1, 2. *It was noised that he was in the house, &c.*—He had entered privately, to avoid observation; and the eager people no sooner heard of his arrival, than they so crowded to the house, that it overflowed, so that there was *no room*

about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 [b] Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take

[b] Job xiv, 4; Isaiah xliii, 25.

to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, that is, in the porch or vestibule. *And he preached the word to them*, placing himself so as to be heard both by those within and without. The word τον λογον is here the same as "the Gospel of the kingdom," Matt. iv, 23. This Gospel, in its various principles, bearings, and developements, doctrinal, practical, and hortatory, was the great subject of our Lord's preaching; and it came afterward to be termed among the disciples emphatically THE WORD; which was probably its common and familiar designation among Christians when St. Mark wrote his gospel.

Verse 3. *One sick of the palsy, &c.*—For observations on this miracle which is very remarkable for the dispute with the scribes connected with it, see the notes on Matt. ix, 2, &c. The only additional circumstance in this place which needs remark, is the uncovering the roof by the friends of the paralytic, in order to get the man into the presence of Christ; because they could not approach him on account of the crowd, who filled the vestibule as well as the house. Some elaborate expositions have been offered of this transaction, the object of which appears to have been to evade the difficulty of supposing that the roof was literally uncovered, and the sick man let down through the opening. Yet this is the declaration of the text; and there is in it nothing particularly strange, if we consider that the house where Jesus was, was built in the usual style of domestic architecture in those countries; and that it was the place of his own residence, and a house therefore of the humbler description. Like other buildings, it had a flat roof, and a flight of outward stairs leading to the roof; by these the people bearing the paralytic man might easily ascend; and then the roof, being laid with light materials, as reeds or canes, covered with lime, might easily be opened without any danger to those in the room below, or any damage which might not be soon repaired and at trifling expense. Thus we do no violence to the expressions. *They uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up*, which are utterly unconnected with letting the couch down through an awning, which some suppose to have covered the courtyard, or the bringing it down the interior staircase. Besides, this house was of too common a class to have a quadrangle with the luxury of an awning as a defence against the sun; and being only of one story high, as the account intimates, it had no interior staircase down which the descent could be made. That they had been at some particular pains to accomplish their object, more indeed than would be implied in letting a man down into a court from a low building, or bringing him down a pair of stairs, is evident from their *faith* being commended by our Lord: *and when he saw their faith*, as expressed by their laborious and determined efforts, even to force their way into his presence. The notion that Christ was sitting in an *upper room*, is contrary to the history; from which it appears that he was teaching in the house, so that those before the door might also hear. The house, in fact, appears to have been Peter's, or his wife's mother's, where Jesus was an inmate, and was such as fishermen generally occupied.

Verse 8. *Perceived in his spirit.*—This, by the ancient commentators, was thought to signify *by his Divine nature;* Rosenmuller, Campbell, and others, explain επιγνους τω πνευματι αυτου, *having perceived in himself;* but some think it redundant; others, with Campbell, think it intimates that our Lord did not derive his knowledge by the ordinary modes, but from powers peculiar to himself. This is true; but is a circuitous way of expressing a very plain truth. The evangelist

up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

13 And he went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 [c] And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alpheus, sitting *at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

18 [d] And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth †new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

23 [e] And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was a hungered, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

27 And he said unto them, The Sab-

[c] Matt. ix, 9.—* Or, *at the place where the custom was received.*

[d] Matt. ix, 14; Luke v, 33.—† Or, *raw*, &c., *unwrought.*—[e] Matt. xii, 1.

clearly meant to say that our Lord knew the thoughts and secret reasonings of the scribes; but that he knew it not from information, but from the intimations of his own mind; he knew it, in fact, by an attribute which proves him to be God, the attribute of omniscience.

Verse 14. *He saw Levi*, &c.—See notes on Matt. ix, 9–13.

Verse 18. *The disciples of John*, &c.—See notes on Matt. ix, 14–17.

Verses 23–26. *He went through the corn fields*, &c.—See notes on Matt. xii, 1–8. At the time here mentioned, Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar, was high priest. But the difficulty may be solved either by supposing that Ahimelech had the name also of Abiathar, which is supported by comparing 2 Sam. viii, 17, with 1 Chron. xviii, 16; or that Abiathar was the high priest's sagan or deputy, and therefore called popularly the high priest himself. Therefore the Jews say that "the son of a high priest, who is deputed by his father in his stead, is called a high priest." Επι has been variously taken; but either of the above solutions leaves its sense unforced, as it is frequently used for *in the time of*, and here properly by our translators, *in the days of Abiathar*, &c.

Verse 27. *The Sabbath was made for man*, &c.—In addition to the notes on this transaction in Matt. xii, 1–8, it may be remarked on this passage, that it is impossible to conceive a dictum of wisdom in form of a maxim so finely guarded on "the right hand and on the left," and yet left so decisively practical. It is beautifully though somewhat enigmatically founded upon the fact, that man was created before the Sabbath was instituted; not the Sabbath set apart, and then man made to observe and honour it. This shows the great end for which the Sabbath was appointed—not its own observance, not that man should give to it for its own sake a hal-

bath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

lowed character, as if man had been created on purpose to show it respect; but man was first made, and then the Sabbath was instituted, THE END of which institution terminated in MAN, in his interest, happiness, and spiritual improvement, to which the Sabbath was therefore to be SUBSERVIENT. Here then the great rule comes in as to sabbatical observance. Whatever is enjoined upon man with reference to the Sabbath, which has not for its end man's instruction in religion, his intercourse with God in worship, and which superstitiously prevents his being fitted for duty by proper bodily refreshments, or his being relieved as far as possible from bodily pains and miseries, that his heart may be filled with gratitude, and his mouth with praise, is subordinating man to the Sabbath, making MAN the servant of a DAY, to give it ceremonial distinction without moral purpose or effect; whereas by fixing the attention upon the true end of the institution, it is subordinated to its primitive and noble intention, the promotion of piety, peace, and holiness; and so it will appear that the Sabbath was made for man, was appointed by God for his spiritual and eternal benefit. When, however, it is said that *the Sabbath was made for man*, let it be remarked that no laxity of RELIGIOUS regard to the Sabbath can be justified by this sentiment. Wo to those who thus pervert the words of truth and mercy. The universal obligation of the Sabbath is unequivocally asserted in these words: *The Sabbath was made for* MAN,—not for Jews only; or for any other class of men, but for MAN; for man even in his innocence and purity, and therefore, for all his descendants; for man considered as a moral and accountable being, who needs to hold special intercourse with his Maker, who ought to be detached from worldly cares, that he may do this with a calm and recollected spirit; and who is under obligation in public assemblies to acknowledge God, and to keep up the knowledge and influence of truth in the world from age to age. And when it is said that it *was made for man*, the meaning is evident, that it was instituted chiefly, and in its highest reasons, to promote in him the fear and love of God, by giving him leisure for religious exercises, and appointing their observance. This is the meaning of God's "blessing and sanctifying the day," consecrating and setting it apart for such hallowed services as should bring man into communion with God, and thus secure his constant "blessing." Many subordinate ends of human interest and happiness result from sabbatical observance, which indeed prove that duty and felicity are always in the result bound up together; but the grand character and end of this Divine institution is, that it was made for the purpose of promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of the human race; and whatever is inconsistent with these is an obvious violation of the law of the Sabbath, and a grievous sin against our own mercy.

Verse 28. *The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.*—Our blessed Lord here asserts his right, 1. To interpret the law of the Sabbath; 2. To alter or modify it as he pleased; 3. To alter the time of its observance, which he afterward did through his apostles, from the seventh to the first day of the week. And if any ask our authority for observing this day, and not the Jewish Sabbath, the answer is, that in the Christian Scriptures it bears the name of "THE LORD'S DAY," with manifest reference to this text, in which Christ asserts his power over it, as Lawgiver: *the Son of man is* LORD *also of the Sabbath.* It is "the Lord's day," because he himself appointed it, by his own authority, to be the Sabbath for all succeeding ages. Those who, like Campbell, understand the term *Son of man*, here, to signify any man, and the sentiment to be, that as *the Sabbath was made for man*, so man is its lord, fall into this erroneous interpretation through considering the words as the inference from the verse preceding; whereas it is the general conclusion from the whole argument, which is more fully stated by St. Matthew. There our Lord argues that as the priests did servile work in the temple because of the sacredness of the place, he who was "greater than the temple" itself had rights on this subject which no mere man could have; and it is to this his dignity that the words refer, and from which they flow, as the natural conclusion. *Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.* See the note on Matt. xii, 8.

CHAPTER III.

1 Christ healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities: 11 rebuketh the unclean spirits: 13 chooseth his twelve apostles: 22 convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub: 31 and showeth who are his brother, sister, and mother.

1 AND [a] he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the * hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they † pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

13 [b] And he goeth up into a mountain,

[a] Matt. xii, 9.—* Or, *blindness.*

† Or, *rushed.*—[b] Matt. x, 1.

CHAPTER III. Verses 1–6. *A man with a withered hand.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 10–14. Into this interesting narrative St. Mark has introduced the additional circumstance, that *he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* The ANGER was clearly a holy indignation at the hypocrisy which could plume itself upon a strict observance of the Sabbath, and yet suffer human beings to remain in misery, or to die, to be *killed* for want of help. But it was an emotion softened by GRIEF, a painful sympathy at *the hardness* of their hearts; not merely their want of compassion, although their superstition had blinded the natural feelings of pity toward these distressed creatures; but at their *perversity of mind, their blindness of heart,* as it is in the Vulgate, that stubborn determination to cling to their errors which rendered his instructions only the means of heightening their guilt. That the anger was the anger of holiness and love, is proved from the grief inflicted upon his spirit by their dangerous, and now almost hopeless, spiritual condition.

Verse 6. *The Herodians.*—See the note on Matt. xxii, 16.

Verse 12. *And he straitly charged.*—They declared him to be "the Son of God," and he strictly inhibited them from *making him known,* that is, under that character: but not merely as the Messiah, which our Lord publicly professed to be. So that here we have another proof that the phrase, *Son of God* implied, in the commonly received language of the Jews, something higher than simply the office of Messiah. This must be allowed, or an absurd tautology will take place in some passages. Thus, in the very first verse of this gospel, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Here, if *the Son of God* conveyed the same idea as the Messiah or Christ, it would be as though St. Mark had written, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Christ." And also in Luke iv, 41, "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God," it would be only saying, "Thou art Christ the Christ," unless the Son of God implied a distinct and higher conception, one in fact which related not to his office only, but to his nature. On this point see the notes on chap. i, 34, and on Matt. xvi, 20.

Verse 13. *Whom he would.*—The appointment to the apostolic office was an act of SOVEREIGN CHOICE for which Christ gave no reason. He made no apologies to those of his disciples who were not so called, and he al-

and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went *into a house.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his † friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

* Or, *home.*

† Or, *kinsmen.*

lowed no one who had the call to refer it to any merit in himself. "He gave no account of his matters" in this respect; and thereby showed that he was the Lord of his Church, and that he has a prerogative which he suffers not to be invaded. It is often by confounding this election to offices in the Church, which is in its nature unconditional, with *personal* election unto salvation, which is conditional upon repentance, faith, and perseverance, that men have fallen into great errors in the interpretation of Scripture. On the calling of the apostles see the notes on Matt. x, 1, &c.

Verse 14. *He ordained twelve.*—Εποιησε, he *constituted* or *appointed* twelve.

Verse 17. *Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder.*—However verbal critics may differ as to the derivation of the latter part of this compound word, the interpretation of Mark fixes its sense. The sons of Zebedee were surnamed *υιοι βρονῆς*, the sons of thunder. This could not refer, as some have dreamed, to their hasty, impetuous disposition, of which, however, but one instance is given, and that one rather of mistaken zeal than natural ardour; and it is not at all probable that our Lord would perpetuate the remembrance of an infirmity which his Divine grace was to cure, even did it exist, by affixing it upon them with their new name. Nor was the name descriptive of the manner of their preaching. That of John appears from his writings to have been as sweet and attractive as his disposition, and the reverse of either loud stentorian declamation, or the hurling of the flaming thunderbolts of the Divine threatenings. From what little appears of James' character, he filled his high office, chiefly at Jerusalem, with "meekness of wisdom," and stands forth as a calm, rather than an impetuous man. The reason of the appellation is probably drawn from the truth of which they were to be such eminent ministers, rather than their own mode of preaching. The *thunder* is the Gospel itself, the public voice of God in the world, moving and shaking the minds of men wherever proclaimed; and when James and John are called *sons of thunder*, the meaning is, that they should rank among the greatest instruments of sounding forth the voice of God, the authoritative declaration of his will contained in the Gospel.

Verse 21. *And when his friends heard of it.*—Our Lord, having called his apostles, returned home; and again the multitudes so press upon him for instruction that he and the disciples *could not eat bread:* so that it is evident that Christ denied himself of his regular meals to continue his discourses to a people so eager to hear him. It was this which led his *friends*, his kinsmen or natural relations, to go forth to *lay hold upon him*, that is, to constrain him to spare himself from such excessive labours, and to retire for repose: *for they said, He is beside himself.* Some of the relations of Christ did not believe on him; and if these were of that infidel number, notwithstanding the natural kindness they felt toward him, they might use this expression in its opprobrious, though not in an exactly literal sense, and might in truth regard him as a dreaming enthusiast, and not of sober judgment; and his excessive zeal on this occasion would seem to confirm the injurious opinion of men of worldly minds, disqualified from judging rightly on a spiritual case and character. If this be the correct view, there is in it nothing injurious to the character of our Lord's sobriety, as those critics seem to have thought who have struggled so hard to torture the passage to several other senses, in order to avoid the apparent difficulty. But if these relations of Christ, through the same prejudices and worldliness of heart as other Jews, did not believe on him, as we are expressly told some of his brethren did not, they could not comprehend his character and motives, and by consequence could not rightly estimate his conduct. To them Christ would appear *beside himself*, in the same sense as St. Paul appeared "beside himself, and mad" to Festus, that is, under the influence of an irrational religious excitement; but all this was never-

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, [c] He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

28 [d] Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 ¶ [e] There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

[c] Matt. ix, 34.—[d] Matt. xii, 31.

[e] Matt. xii, 46.

theless "truth and soberness," and only proves that "the spiritual man is judged of no man" not spiritual. These *friends* of Christ might not, however, be his unbelieving brethren, but others better affected toward him; and then the words may be taken to mean, *he is carried out of himself* by his zeal; on which account they interfered kindly to care for one who was so absorbed in his work as not to spare himself.

Verse 22. *He hath Beelzebub.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 24–32.

Verse 31. *His brethren and his mother, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 46–50.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The parable of the sower,* 14 *and the meaning thereof.* 21 *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* 26 *The parable of the seed growing secretly.* 30 *and of the mustard seed.* 35 *Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.*

1 And [a] he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased: and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

[a] St. Matthew, chap. xiii, 1.

CHAPTER IV. Verse 3. *There went out a sower to sow, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xiii, 3–23.

Verses 21–23. *Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, &c.*—Because passages similar to this and one that immediately follow.

9 And he saith unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables:

12 [b] That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 ¶ The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, [c] and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

21 ¶ [d] And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, *or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

22 [e] For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye hear: [f] with what measure ye

[b] Matt. xiii, 14.—[c] 1 Tim. vi, 17.—[d] Matt. v, 15.

* The word in the original signifieth a less measure, as Matt. v, 15.—[e] Matt. x, 26.—[f] Matt. vii, 2.

are found in the sermon on the mount, some interpreters have thought that St. Mark scatters portions of what might have been related to him of that Divine discourse, promiscuously in his gospel. But this is both an uncritical and a mischievous conclusion. The passages in question have something of a proverbial character, and were therefore applicable to quite distinct occasions; and accordingly we here find this allusion to *the candle*, or family lamp, applied to his exposition of the important parable of the sower. It contains the reason why, though he spoke in parables for a time, he explained their meaning to the inquiring disciples, that it was not for themselves, but for others, and that he was thus qualifying them to be the public instructers of mankind. He had lighted their candle or lamp by this exposition of the parable; and now they were to put the lamp upon its *stand*, that it might give light to all. In other words, Christ teaches his apostles that when they became public instructers, they were not, like the Jewish rabbins, or the Gentile philosophers, to have a secret and an open doctrine, but that they were to "*declare the whole counsel of God*;" and lest any in future should attempt to justify a reservation of peculiar truths from the people at large, and the restriction of them to the initiated, from our Lord's own example, who had left parables spoken to the multitude, and had confined the interpretation to a few disciples only, which arose out of circumstances of an obviously peculiar character, he himself adds, with direct reference to his own practice, and to show that his conduct in this respect was temporary only, *For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.* Whatever Christ hid for the time under parable or type, or enigmatical allusion, or his own mysterious conduct on some occasions, was all with reference to that full and open "manifestation of the truth" which succeeded his ascension; which manifestation was the great office of his apostles and first disciples. To them he therefore turns in the next verses, and enjoins the most diligent and careful hearing upon them, that they might so understand as to teach. *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*

Verse 24. *Take heed what ye hear.*—Here βλεπω signifies *to consider, to pay attention to*; for our Lord is not cautioning them against hearing false doctrine, but is exhorting them to attend seriously to the true. The words might therefore have been rendered, *Carefully consider what ye hear.*

mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 § For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26 ¶ And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is * brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

§ Matt. xiii, 12.

* Or, *ripe.*

With what measure ye mete.—This proverbial expression occurs in the sermon on the mount, in the form of a caution against censorious judging. Here it is used in quite a different application, and offers the most persuasive motive to the serious hearing of the word. According to the measure of attention you pay to the instructions of heavenly wisdom shall be your improvement in it; give your ear to God, and he will pour knowledge into it; give your heart to the truth, and the truth shall enlighten and sanctify it; accordingly it is added, *Unto you that hear*, attentively and obediently, *more shall be given.* The connection of these words with our Lord's discourse, is now apparent; he enjoins it upon the apostles diligently to LEARN, because they were appointed to TEACH; and to acquaint themselves with the whole doctrine of his religion because no part of it was to be reserved to any privileged few; but its light was to diffuse itself upon all, like the beams of the family lamp, or the sun "which goeth from one part of the heaven to the other." The same lesson is taught to modern ministers, and indeed to all Christians whatever. They are all diligently *to hear*, *consider*, and LEARN the words of Christ, in order that they may be qualified to make them known to the whole world of ignorant and vicious men.

Verse 25. *For he that hath.*—See the notes on Matt. xiii, 10–14.

Verses 26–29. *So is the kingdom of God, &c.*—This beautiful parable is recorded only by St. Mark; and its connection with what precedes may easily be traced. Christ had represented himself in the preceding parable as the sower of the word, and had solemnly enjoined such a profitable hearing of it upon his disciples as that they should "keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." But they in turn were to be sowers of the word of God, and under their designation as the future teachers of the world, he had addressed to them the cautions which have just been noticed. Our Lord now considers them as going forth to sow, and the leading object of the parable was to encourage them in their great work, and to fortify them against impatience and despondency. The metaphors are taken from husbandry. *A man casts seed into the ground; then sleeps, and rises night and day*, that is, he pursues the other duties of life, labours by day, and sleeps by night, to refresh himself for the labours of the day following; but never thinks that he can make the seed grow by skill of his own, or that his presence with it, unfolding and nourishing its parts, is necessary to its germination. He leaves it to the laws impressed upon nature by its Author, and to his blessing which gives those laws all their energy; and the seed springs and grows up *he knoweth not how;* nor does he wait to know how these mysteries may be solved before he casts in his seed, nor quarrel with the result, but he thankfully receives it, although he cannot trace the process. The effect as far as visible agency is concerned, is produced by the energy of the earth, under the influence of the rain and sun: *the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*, αυτοματη, "spontaneously," without needing the agency of man to produce the effect, after the ground is once prepared, and the seed deposited. Then the wonderful process goes on independent of man: all is NATURE; that is, all is GOD.—*The blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear*, succeed each other; and *when the fruit is brought forth*,—literally, *delivers itself up*, or *yields itself* to the reaper,—*he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.* Here then we have represented the part which man takes in the production of the moral harvest. He prepares the ground, sows the seed, and finally reaps it; but the result depends upon a higher, and invisible, and inscrutable power. This opens the seed, strikes its root, supplies it with nourishment, unfolds the germ into *the blade, the ear, the full*, the multiplied and mature *grain in the ear*, and then yields or delivers over, παραδιδωμι, the perfected harvest into the hand of man to be laid up for his sustenance. The fine moral conclusions from this beautiful parable could not escape the apostles, and therefore no explanation is added. They were taught that the success of the Gospel in the hearts of men is as certainly produced by Divine influence as the fertility of seeds in the earth by the influence of the invisible power of God working in the elements; and that they were therefore to sow the seed of truth, as

30 ¶ And he said, [h] Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 [i] And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

35 [k] And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

[h] Matt. xiii, 31.—[i] Matt. xiii, 34.

[k] Matt. viii, 23.

the husbandman his grain, in PRAYER and in ENTIRE TRUST upon the power and goodness of God to make it fruitful. This appears to be the great leading lesson of the parable; and nothing could tend so powerfully to excite the Christian husbandman to labour, as to be thus warranted to depend upon the exerted influence of God to give effect to his labours. It was his to sow, and to leave the seed to the secret, invisible, but constant blessing and influence of God, always putting forth its energy in the heart which receives him, and carrying on the work of grace, like the process of vegetation, to consummation. To this there may be subordinate lessons; but they are not so clear, and the fancy of men must not be suffered to intrude itself into these sacred portions of God's word without authority. This one grand truth is surely enough to meditate upon: that God works in the heart of man as certainly as in the elements of nature; and that, as he delights to pour out his goodness in rewarding the labour of the husbandman with abundant harvests, and cheers his hope by the gradual growth of the seed he has sown in faith; so he rejoices over man to convert the barren waste of his withered nature into spiritual fertility, to bless the springing of the seed of every holy principle, and pure and kind affection, and will complete this wondrous work of his power and love, by *delivering us up*, mature and fit for heaven into the hands of the appointed reapers. With firm FAITH therefore in these promises,—for the parable has the force of a promise,—let the ministers of Christ sow their seed, and wait for the increase.

Verses 30–32. *A grain of mustard seed.*—See the notes on Matt. xiii, 31, 32. This parable, like the foregoing, was designed to encourage the labours of the apostles, and all ministers to the end of time. Each parable, too, is applicable both to the effect of Divine grace in the hearts of individuals, and in the world at large.

Verse 36. *They took him even as he was in the ship.*—That is, instantly, without any preparation. See the notes on Matt. viii, 24–27.

CHAPTER V.

1 Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, 13 they enter into the swine. He healeth the woman of the bloody issue, 35 and raiseth from death Jarius's daughter.

1 [a] And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

[a] St. Matthew, chap. viii, 28.

CHAPTER V. Verses 1–20. *The country of the Gadarenes.*—See the notes on Matt. viii, 28–34.

As to this miracle St. Mark furnishes some additional and interesting particulars. The name of the demon who possessed the man, mentioned by St. Mark, (and he speaks of but one, probably because he only made himself remarkable by his conversation with our Lord,) is said to be *Legion.* The Roman legion consisted of six thousand men; but the term appears to have got into popular use, as importing many indefinitely. The name imports that this spirit was one of authority and command among the *orders* and *princedoms* of hell, and that the other spirits then present were subordinate to him. This appears from his acting in the name of the rest: he worships Jesus; he acknowledges him to be *the Son of the most high God;* and he *adjures,* that is, earnestly entreats, (for the strict meaning, to lay under an oath, cannot be admitted,) he prays with fearful anxiety not to be tormented, nor that he and his fellow fiends should *be sent away out of that country;* and in this prayer, and that they might be *sent into the swine, all the devils* joined and *besought him.* These are awful indications of a spiritual world, and of the number, power, and malignity of these fiends of darkness. They do not dispel the mystery of that world; they rather suggest new inquiries than answer old ones; but at least we see the power of our Redeemer exalted above all the numbers and all the malice of devils: and if modern times are not familiar with these spectacles of demoniacal possession,—the greatest calamity which could befall mortals,—let us not forget that it is our great privilege to live under the mediatorial reign of Him who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and to give to our Saviour the praise due unto his name, for that restraint which he places upon the power and subtlety of Satan, even before the time of his casting out, so that he may no longer deceive the nations. The picture, too, drawn of the principal demoniac by this evangelist, is equally natural and affecting, and carries with it its own evidence of truth: *He had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder, and the fetters broken in pieces, neither could any man tame him;* but this fierce demoniac now is seen *sitting* near our Lord, and *clothed,* and *in his right mind,* calm, self-possessed, rational. And his gratitude appears to have been equal to his deliverance; for when our

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 [b] And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee,* come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter,

[b] St. Matthew, chap. ix, 18.

Lord was departing, *he prayed him that he might be with him.* This was not permitted to him; but he was directed to go home, and declare the mercies and compassions of the Lord: and he was not unmindful of the injunction; for *he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel.* All this seems to indicate something more than the flow of gratitude for deliverance from mere bodily affliction; the healing power appears to have restored the soul also to health by its touch, and to have filled the heart and mouth of this poor sufferer with truly religious joy. So glorious were the triumphs of our Saviour's mercy. As these countries were crowded with a Gentile population, this man became a witness for Christ among the mixed races of that district, which might be one reason why he was not permitted to follow Christ in the number of his disciples. The correspondence between the desire of the devils to remain in the country of the Gadarenes, and the eagerness of the people to press the departure of Christ, may also be noted. No wonder the devils affected a country which was so disaffected to the Saviour; but the circumstance is admonitory. We cannot reject Christ without exposing ourselves to the more special influence and more confirmed power of our great adversary, the destroyer of souls. Let all who make light of Christ be warned by this history.

Verse 22. *One of the rulers of the synagogue, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. ix.

Verses 25–34. *A certain woman.*—In addition to the notes on Matt. ix, 20–22, it may be added, 1. That St. Mark's account, which is more particular, presents an affecting picture of hopeless disease, and the miseries resulting from its long continuance. *She had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse.* She brought therefore to Christ, pain, poverty, disappointment, a troubled spirit, and a dis-

thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any farther?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he

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order dragging her rapidly to the grave.—This extreme spectacle of wretchedness is brought before us, as on purpose to teach us never to despair when we come to Christ. A learned foreign physician has written a treatise to prove that all the diseases cured by Christ were of a kind incurable by human skill and medicine. It is certain that the greater number of them were of that description, and are equally so now, as then, notwithstanding the improved state of the science. In the case before us, it was enough to prove it a miracle, that the disease was removed at once, which, for twelve years, *many physicians* had attempted to cure.

2. The manner of the cure is as remarkable as the case. It was not effected by a word, a look, or a touch of our Lord's hand; but through the woman touching the hem or fringe of his garment. In the notes on the account as given by St. Matthew, it was stated that we have no reason for concluding that this believing woman acted under the idea that the fringe of our Lord's robe possessed some peculiar virtue. This has been generally assumed; but the woman was a more enlightened person. She had *heard of Jesus*, and from the accounts of him appears to have conceived the highest notion of his dignity and power, as well as compassion. Her knowledge of Christ was therefore the ground of her faith, and her faith corresponded to her knowledge. She had probably heard, too, that it pleased Christ, sometimes at least, to allow even multitudes to touch him, and by that means to derive healing virtue from him. So in Luke vi, 19: "And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." That this depended upon his will, all must know: it was a grand exhibition of himself as the source of health, a sublime representation of his glorious fulness as the fountain of life, and an emblem of its free and wide diffusiveness. In that way only could it be understood by these multitudes and this pious woman. Believing that he surrounded himself, so to speak, with this healing influence to all who should approach in faith, she came behind, and silently, because her case did not admit of being explained, and because, being by the law unclean, any declaration of her case would have led the bystanders to drive her out of the company: she simply touches the fringe of his garment, in token at once of her reverence and faith; and thus trusts to be healed, not indeed without the knowledge of Christ, (for we have no reason to conclude that,) but without the knowledge of the crowd. That she expected to be healed by stealth, without the concurrence of the will of Christ, with her touching his garment, is contradicted by the commendation given to her *faith;* for that would have been, it is true, such faith as is exercised in charms and no higher, but not that FAITH IN CHRIST which the Gospel recognizes, and which Christ only could commend. Her coming *behind* our Lord was therefore an act of the highest faith. She could not otherwise approach him without being compelled to a declaration of her case, which her modesty forbade; but in coming behind she evaded the particular notice of others, yet put herself at once upon the superhuman knowledge and pity of our Saviour. And when she showed so much emotion when challenged by the eye of our Lord, which singled her out, as we gather from St. Luke's account, this was not the result of surprise that she should have been detected by our Lord, as of the fear that she had been too presumptuous. She was challenged that she might confess the whole, and that so great a miracle might be declared for the conviction and benefit of others. The expression that Jesus *knew in himself that virtue had gone out of him*, will be rendered less equivocal by translating *δυναμις power;* and then the meaning is, that his POWER WAS CONSCIOUSLY EXERTED in rewarding the faith which had led her to touch the hem of his garment, and at once healing her malady. It was his will indeed sometimes to make the speaking of a word, sometimes a touch of his own hand, the means of transmitting the healing power to the sick, and sometimes the touching of his garments or person by others; but in neither case, whether he touched others or was touched by them, could any power be communicated but by a volition of his own; and it was restricted to them that approached him in a proper spirit. The expression of power or virtue *going forth*, is therefore a popular mode of speaking.

Verse 35. *Thy daughter is dead.*—See the notes on Matt. ix, 18–26.

saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Verse 40. *They laughed him to scorn.*—This is too strong a translation of *και κατεγελων αυτου, and they laughed at him.* It is a laugh of incredulity.

Verse 41. *Talitha cumi.*—Two Syriac words, signifying, *Maid, arise!*

Verse 42. *Astonished with a great astonishment.*—That is, they were exceedingly astonished. The addition of a similar word is used by ancient writers to denote emphasis. This idiom is found in the LXX., and in both Greek and Latin authors.

Verse 43. *That no man should know it.*—This must mean that they should not openly declare it immediately, in order that he might retire before the excitement had spread among the people. For it could not long be kept secret, since the father had requested our Lord publicly to go down to his house for the purpose of working the miracle; and the hired mourners, who had been put out of the room, and had derided our Lord when he declared she was not dead, would naturally wait to know the result. That the prohibition was quite temporary, appears also from the parents being exhorted to give food to their daughter; thereby occupying their attention till he should withdraw.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ is contemned of his countrymen.* 7 *He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.* 14 *Divers opinions of Christ.* 18 *John Baptist is beheaded,* 29 *and buried.* 30 *The apostles return from preaching.* 34 *The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.* 45 *Christ walketh on the sea:* 53 *and healeth all that touch him.*

1 And [a] he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, [b] A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them.*

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. [c] And he went round about the villages, teaching.

7 ¶ [d] And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no * money in *their* purse:

9 But *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

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[a] Matt. xiii, 54.—[b] John iv, 44.—[c] Matt. ix, 35; Luke xiii, 22.—[d] Matt. x, 1.

* The word signifieth *a piece of brass money, in value somewhat less than a farthing,* Matt. x, 9; but here it is taken in general for *money.*

CHAPTER VI. Verse 1. *Came into his own country.*—See notes on Matthew xiii, 54–58.

Verses 7–11. *Began to send them forth by two and two.*—See notes on Matthew x, 1, &c.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 [e] And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, [f] shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, [g] and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

14 [h] And King Herod heard *of him;* (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 [i] But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias's sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, [k] It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had * a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and † observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

[e] Matt. x, 14.—[f] Acts xiii, 51.—[g] James v, 14. [h] Matt. xiv, 1.

[i] Luke iii, 19.—[k] Lev. xviii, 16.—* Or, *an inward grudge.*—† Or, *kept him*, or, *saved him.*

Verse 12. *That men should repent.*—Thus the preaching of John the Baptist, of our Lord himself, and of his apostles now sent forth on an extensive mission through the towns and cities of the Jews, was in substance the same. All announced the approach of the kingdom of God, the commencement of Messiah's saving reign; but all enjoy repentance as a preparation for it; to the humble and penitent only are the promises of salvation made, and to none but those who are consciously sick of sin can our Saviour prove a physician. The doctrine of repentance is as essential a part of true evangelical preaching now as it was then, and it will remain so to the end of time. He is not a true minister of Christ who speaks only of pardon and salvation: he must speak previously of men's guilt and danger, and urge the consideration of that upon them until they feel it; or in vain will he dwell upon the gracious offices of Christ, and the provisions of the covenant of grace.

Verse 13. *Anointed with oil.*—Although various vegetable oils were used medicinally, it is not probable that the apostles used oil for the recovery of the sick persons. To be sure, if they applied it indiscriminately in all the complaints they met with, that would show that the cures could not arise from the natural virtue of the oil, which is not suitable to every complaint; but from the special force and efficacy given to it by God. It is, however, more probable that the oil was used symbolically. It was the emblem of gladness; and the outward sign of joy suitably expressed the delightful emotions of those who were healed in a moment, by the power of "the name" of Jesus, from the most torturing and depressing maladies. The papistical doctrine of extreme unction has no support from this passage. It does not indeed appear that the apostles, in anointing the sick, acted under the command of Christ, or that this was a religious rite at all. It was, most probably, the usual emblematical method of expressing joy upon receiving any particular blessing from God. But if it could be proved to have been an authorized religious rite as to the apostles in the miraculous cure of diseases, it is no precedent for us, who have not these powers, and it would therefore be absurd to use the sign without possessing the means of giving it import by realizing its meaning. But extreme unction is, by the confession of the papists themselves, an essentially different rite. It is not given for healing; it is postponed until there is no hope of life; and is an absurd and senseless anointing unto DEATH, which neither as a symbol, nor as a means of benefit, bears any resemblance to the unction mentioned in the text, and in the Epistle of St. James, or that practised by the primitive Christians.

Verse 14. *And King Herod heard of him, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xiv, 1, &c.

Verse 20. *Feared John.*—He revered him for his eminent sanctity, and *observed* him; either he had regarded his advices formerly, or, which is the more probable sense, he had guarded him from injury and persecution.—These verbs are all, as Grotius observes, to be understood in the plusquam perfect, as frequent with the Hebrews and Hellenists. It was this reverence of Herod for John which had prevented Herodias from pre-

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee;

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king sent * an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

30 [l] And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 [m] And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 [n] And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and he was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 [o] And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred † pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

* Or, *one of his guard*.—[l] Luke ix, 10.—[m] Matt. xiv, 3.

[n] Matt. ix, 36.—[o] Matt. xiv, 15.—† The Roman penny is sevenpence halfpenny, as Matt. xviii, 28.

viously compassing his death. On account of his having spoken plainly to Herod on the unlawfulness of his marriage with Herodias, *she had a quarrel against him*, she was violently angry with him, *and would have killed him, but she could not*. She could not prevail upon Herod to put him to death; and so she resolved upon accomplishing that by stratagem which she had failed to accomplish by direct entreaty.

Verse 21. *A convenient day*.—Ημεραν ευκαιρον, a leisure or vacant day, that is, a festival: but the sense of *convenient* or *opportune* is perhaps to be preferred, as marking a design on the part of Herodias, to accomplish her wicked project on Herod's birthday; so that the dancing of her daughter, and Herod's entanglement in a rash vow, were less accidents of which she promptly availed herself, than parts of the plot previously laid, and foreseen as probable consequences. But see the notes on Matt. xiv. 6–12.

Verses 35–40. *This is a desert place, &c.*—On this miracle of feeding the five thousand, see the notes on Matt. xiv, 14–21. To this account, however, St. Mark adds several circumstances, in his own vigorous and graphic method. He introduces the disciples saying, in answer to Christ, (who had said, *Give ye them to eat*,) *Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?* This Lightfoot has shown was with the Jews an expression for a considerable sum. He brings us also upon the spot, to see, as it were, the ORDER in which the

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before * unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 [p] And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

53 [q] And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in

* Or, *over against Bethsaida.*—[p] Matt. xiv, 23.

[q] Matt. xiv, 34.

Master of the feast had placed his guests, that he might distribute to them his bounty, and all might partake of it in a composed and thankful manner, as became so great an occasion. *And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies, συμποσια συμποσια,* in rows, as at table; for to express distribution the Hebrews double the words; *upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, πρασιαι πρασιαι,* in squares, behind one another, like the beds of a garden, as the word signifies, *by hundreds, and by fifties,* so that they could be thus most conveniently served, and accurately counted.

Verse 47. *The ship was in the midst of the sea.*—See notes on Matt. xiv, 24–33.

Verse 52. *For their heart was hardened.*—This is given either as a reason for the excessive fear of the disciples in the storm, or for the excessive wonder they expressed when the wind was stilled by the word of Jesus. In either application it is apposite. Had they rightly *considered* the *miracle of the loaves*, they could scarcely have doubted of Christ's care for them in the storm, or his ability to help them; and had they properly reflected upon the stupendous character of the miracle by which the five thousand were fed,—how that it proved that he possessed an absolute power over the elements of matter, they would have been equally impressed with that miracle as with the stilling of the storm. Right views, arising from calm and discerning consideration, would have rendered the *miracle of the loaves* more astonishing, and the calming of the wind and the sea, somewhat less so; for at the latter, says St. Mark, *they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure; for their heart was hardened;* that is, dull of apprehension, not wickedly insensible, the sense in which the same word is sometimes used; but inapt to learn, and slow to receive conviction,—a fault which the evangelists several times record against themselves and their fellow disciples with the utmost simplicity and humility.

Verses 53–56. *Came into the land of Gennesaret.*—This district extended about four miles along the north-western shore of the sea of Galilee, and was a most fertile, beautiful, and very populous tract of country. St. Matthew states the powerful impression made upon the people by this visit of our Saviour; (see notes on Matt. xiv, 34–36;) but St. Mark is more circumstantial, and his description unites wonderful vigour and graphic delineation with brevity. Messengers *run through the whole region round about* to announce Christ's arrival; to whatever place he was come, the people *carry about the sick on couches;* and through whatever *city, village, or country* he passes, they lay *the sick in the streets, the market places,* and roads, that is, by the wayside on which he was travelling, ranged, it should seem, on either hand; while their friends, or the sick themselves, beseech him *that they might touch the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole.* What a scene! As he pursues his march of mercy, the sick lie before him along the streets and roads, in all the variety of disease,

beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched * him were made whole.

* Or, *it.*

distortion, and pain, but, as he passes, they touch him and are healed; and he leaves behind him the monuments of his compassion, surrounded with their rejoicing friends, and all giving glory to God, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel."

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands.* 8 *They break the commanament of God by the traditions of men.* 14 *Meat defileth not the man.* 24 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

1 THEN [a] came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with † unwashen, hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands ‡ oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of § cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of ‖ tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, [b] This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

[a] Matt. xv, 1.—† Or, *common.*—‡ Or, *diligently:* in the original, *with the fist:* Theophylact, *up to the elbow.*—§ Sextarius is about a pint and a half.—‖ Or, *beds.*—[b] Isaiah xxix, 13; Matt. xv, 8.

CHAPTER VII. Verse 1. *Certain of the scribes which came from Jerusalem.*—See notes on Matt. xv, 1, &c.

Verse 2. *Defiled hands.* Κοινος, *common;* that is, when opposed to holy; ritually *polluted* or *defiled.*

Verse 3. *Except they wash their hands oft.*—Εαν μη πυγμη νιψωνται τας χειρας, has been translated, *up to the elbow, up to the wrist, with the fist,* and, as by our translators, following the Vulgate, *oft;* or, as the Syriac, *diligently.* Wetstein takes the sense to be, "with as much water, at least, as they can hold in the hollow of the hand, the fingers being gathered up," for πυγμη signifies the fist. None of these senses are very satisfactory, and the ancient interpreters appear to have been as perplexed with the expression as the modern. The allusion appears to be to some peculiar mode of washing the hands, among the Jews, which is now unknown; save that they have still curious rules for washing up to the elbow, or to the wrist, or to the joints of the fingers.

Verse 4. *Except they wash.*—Thinking that they might contract impurity from accidental contact with impure persons in the throng of a market, they ate not except they *baptized,* meaning, probably, *bathed* themselves; but this will not prove that to baptize always signifies to immerse, inasmuch as the bathing or washing of the whole body might be performed by affusion, and no doubt often was; and we read also, in what follows, of the Pharisees holding *the washing,* baptism, of *cups* and *pots,* and *brazen vessels,* and of *tables,* κλινων, the *couches* on which they reclined at meals, and which scarcely appear proper subjects for immersion: although it must be acknowledged that in the rules of the more modern Jews, in these matters, the couches are directed to be taken in pieces and dipped. Cups, pots, and other vessels, might be polluted by a person, unclean by the

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye * reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* [c] Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

12 And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 ¶ [d] And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 [e] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 [f] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

24 ¶ [g] And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know *it*; but he could not be hid.

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a † Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

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* Or, *frustrate.*—[c] Matt. xv, 5.—[d] Matt. xv, 10.

[e] Gen. vi, 5; viii, 21.—[f] Matt. xv, 19.—[g] Matt. xv, 21.
† Or, *Gentile.*

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law, having touched them, and the couches by such persons having reclined upon them. Persons legally unclean were not permitted to come into society until they were purified, as those who had touched a dead body, &c.; but these washings appear to have proceeded from over scrupulosity, lest any such defilement had accidentally taken place, unknown to the master of the house.

Verses 9–23. *Ye reject the commandment of God, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xv, 3–20. To the enumeration of the evils which proceed *out of the heart of man*, as given by St. Matthew, St. Mark adds *covetousness*, *wickedness*, πονηρια, which is sometimes taken generally in the sense of vice, *vitiositas*, sometimes for a species of it, as malevolence. The plural form being here used may, however, lead to the more general sense, vice of every kind and degree. *Deceit*, δολος, fraud, and guile; *lasciviousness; an evil eye*, οφθαλμος πονηρος is φθονος, envy; *pride; foolishness*, αφροσυνη, which is probably to be taken as often in the Old Testament for abandoned wickedness and impiety. Whether we regard the thirteen evils enumerated by St. Mark as proceeding from the human heart, or the seven by St. Matthew, a sufficiently awful picture is drawn of fallen human nature; and yet in neither have we a complete catalogue of the vicious affections which break forth into the various evils and crimes which disorder and pollute society. It is here also to be noted that this is not a description of the heart of some one individual, nor of a class of men in some particular place or age; but of the *heart of man:* and so it is the picture of all the unregenerate, and proves the absolute necessity of the renewing grace of God in the case of every man; for, in this his natural state of pollution and defilement, no man can enter into "the kingdom of God." Our Lord's words place the accurate and superstitious care of the Pharisees to avoid fancied defilements, in the strongest contrast with their disregard of the state of their hearts, and of the mass of corruption which was accumulated there, and

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 ¶ And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

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from its bad fountain was sending forth such noxious streams; and the great lesson which it is intended to teach all is the utter futility of a ceremonial religion, however scrupulous, if purity of heart be neglected.

Verse 25. *For a certain woman, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xv, 22–28.

Verse 32. *One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech.*—Μογιλαλος is taken by some, improperly, for *dumb*.—Had he been deaf from his birth, he would probably have been dumb; but that he spake before he was cured, appears from verse 35, where it is said, *he spake plain*, which is never used of those dumb persons who were restored to the use of speech by our Lord. The word signifies a stammerer, or tongue-tied person; and this infirmity would be exasperated by the loss of his hearing. He appears to have been an object more pitiable than a person born deaf, and therefore entirely dumb, as being more sensible of his privations.

Verses 33–37. *Took him aside from the multitude &c.*—In this case our Lord entirely departed from his usual method of performing a cure. *He takes him aside, puts his fingers in his ears, touches his* tied *tongue with spittle, looks up to heaven, sighs,* as oppressed with these spectacles of human suffering, and says, *Ephphatha*, that is, *Be opened.* Dr. Graves observes, "There are two instances beside this in which our Saviour, in performing a miracle, made use of a deliberate external application to the part which he intended to cure; and in all these the reason for employing it seems to have been one and the same, even to convey to the individuals on whom the miracles were performed a clear assurance that Jesus was the person at whose command and by whose agency the cure was wrought, and to enable them to state to others the grounds of this assurance fully and circumstantially." But we may add to this, what is perhaps a more satisfactory reason, that he thereby taught us that his Divine power operates not only immediately but often through instruments: which instrumentality ought, however, so far from turning our thoughts away from him to the creature, to impress us with a deeper sense of his power, who so often makes dull and insensible creatures the means of producing such powerful effects upon our health, happiness, and interests. The very means resorted to here were of a kind which particularly illustrated the Divine power of Christ; and therefore, though the people saw that he put his fingers into his ears, and applied spittle to his tongue, they had no lower a sense of the character of the miracle on that account, *but were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* The power was not in the means employed, but in the mighty word EPHPHATHA, *Be opened;* for then *straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.* And though it is true that sometimes God accomplishes his purposes by means and instruments which appear to have a natural fitness and adaptation to produce the end; yet let it be remembered that all such fitness, where even it is real, is appointed by him, and depends for its efficiency entirely upon him; and that natural powers are heightened or weakened in their efficacy under his blessing or frown, as food to nourish us or medicine to heal us, or the contrary; and that it is still God that worketh all and in all. He therefore ought to be our supreme trust; and for the good done upon earth he alone has a right to the praise.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Christ feedeth the people miraculously: 10 refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees: 14 admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod: 22 giveth a blind man his sight: 27 acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer and rise again: 34 and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the Gospel.

1 In those days the [a] multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them.

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 [b] And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 ¶ [c] Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and *of* the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* [d] because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew *it* he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

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[a] Matt. xv, 32.—[b] Matt. xvi, 1.

[c] Matt. xvi, 5.—[d] Matt. xvi, 7.

CHAPTER VIII. Verse 1. *The multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xv, 32–39.

Verse 11. *A sign from heaven.*—See the notes on Matt. xvi, 1.

Verse 12. *Sighed deeply in his spirit.*—As oppressed with the most painful sense of the perversity of men who refused to admit evidences of truth so strong as those which had been given to them, and were requiring new signs, not because *they* wished to be convinced, but in order to evade the convincing power of the mighty works of which they had already been the witnesses. This was a disposition which our Lord knew would lead to their ruin; and their fearful case lay heavy upon his spirit.

There shall no sign be given.—Ει δοθησεται, *If there shall be given*; an elliptical mode of denial but of the strongest kind, having the force of a solemn oath. So in Ezekiel xiv, 16, *As I live*, ει υιοι η θυγατερες σωθησονται, *if they shall deliver*, that is, *they shall neither deliver sons nor daughters.*

Verse 15. *Leaven of the Pharisees.*—See the notes on Matt. xvi, 5–9.

22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

27 ¶ [e] And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some *say* Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 ¶ And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, [f] Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 [g] Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[e] Matt. xvi, 13.

[f] Matt. x, 38.—[g] Matt. x, 33.

Verses 22, 23. *They bring a blind man unto him.*—This miracle is recorded only by St. Mark; and it is remarkable both for the application of spittle as a means of restoration, and for the gradual process of the cure. For the first, the remarks under the thirty-third verse of the preceding chapter may be referred to; and for the second, as no one can be so stupid as to suppose that he who opened the eyes of the man gradually, could not have done it at once, so we are taught that there is a variety in the Divine proceedings, of which as he gives no account, so we are not able to comprehend its reasons, but are bound to resolve the whole into his infinite though unrevealed wisdom. To be able to accomplish his purposes by an infinite variety of modes, with perfect ease and perfect certainty, is one of the loftiest proofs of perfection; and it lays in our minds the foundation of an absolute trust in God: "He can do all things, and all creatures serve him."

Verses 24, 25. *I see men as trees walking*—He saw dark shadows in motion before him, whom on that account he took to be men; but otherwise he could not distinguish them from trees. Upon the imposition of our Lord's hands a second time, *he saw every man clearly.*

Verse 26. *Neither go into the town, &c.*—From this it would seem that the man was not a resident at Bethsaida; and our Lord sent him home because the people of that city had not profited by his previous miracles. He had already said, "Wo unto thee, Chorazin; wo unto thee, Bethsaida;" and he began now to show his anger by diminishing the privileges which had been hitherto abused.

Verse 27. *Whom do men say that I am?*—See the notes on Matt. xvi, 13–23.

Verse 34. *Deny himself, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xvi, 24–28.

CHAPTER IX.

2 Jesus is transfigured. 11 He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias: 14 casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit: 30 foretelleth his death and resurrection: 33 exhorteth his disciples to humility: 38 bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.

1 And he said unto them, [a] Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

2 ¶ [b] And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him:

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and [c] how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught.

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

14 ¶ [d] And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people,

[a] Matt. xvi, 28.—[b] Matt. xvii, 1.

[c] Isaiah liii, 2, &c.—[d] Matt. xvii, 14.

CHAPTER IX. Verse 1. *There be some of them that stand here.*—See notes on Matt. xvi, 28.

Verse 2. *Was transfigured, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xvii, 1–4.

Verse 11. *Elias must first come, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xvii, 10–12.

Verses 14–24. *And when he came to his disciples.*—That is, to the body of the disciples, those whom he had not taken with him to the scene of the transfiguration, as he did Peter, James, and John. He found them with a *great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them*, perplexing them with objections and difficult inquiries, and especially exulting over them, that they had not been able to cast out a devil from a youth who had been brought to them during the absence of Christ. On this account, see the notes on Matt. xvii, 14–18. St. Mark adds to the relation several striking and affecting particulars; as 1. That as soon as the people beheld him approaching they *were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.* There is a considerable difficulty in explaining what it was in the appearance of Christ which *amazed* the people. That, as they were generally friendly to him and displeased with the carping disputings of the scribes with his disciples during his absence, they should be greatly elevated with joy at seeing him so opportunely approach, is very rational; because they knew well how soon he would silence all these inimical men, as he had often silenced them before, to the great joy of the honest-minded multitudes. But this amazement was an emotion which neither in kind nor degree answers to that expressed by the word εκθαμβεομαι, which denotes the highest degree of astonishment not unmingled with fear or awe. It is therefore probable that there was something of unusual dignity and majesty in the air and mien of our Lord, so lately descended from

when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye * with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he † teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

* Or, *among yourselves.*

† Or, *dasheth him.*

the mountain on which he had been transfigured, which impressed with astonishment and awe those who ran to salute him. That some rays of the glory remained upon his face, as upon the face of Moses after he had been with God on the mount, is an ingenious and not an improbable conjecture of several commentators both ancient and modern.—Certain it is, there was something visible and exceedingly impressive in his aspect; but, whatever it might be, it was probably laid aside before he joined the promiscuous throng and confronted the scribes, as no farther allusion is made to it. 2. The case of the possessed youth is also set forth with additional circumstance. He was not only "lunatic," that is to say, epileptic, and "sore vexed," as stated by St. Matthew, but also *dumb;* and, being *torn*, convulsed, and thrown down by the evil spirit, *he foamed, gnashed with his teeth;* and, by reason of these various torments, he *pined* or *wasted away.* This too was stated by the father to have been the unhappy case of his son from a child, παιδιοθεν; not exactly from infancy, but from boyhood. 3. St. Mark draws the picture of the father in a most affecting manner. He had brought his afflicted child to Jesus, having, no doubt, heard of his fame; but, finding him absent, he had applied to the disciples, and they could not cast him out: either they had attempted and failed, or, what is more probable, for want of faith to encounter so fearful a spirit, (see the notes on Matt. xvii, 14–20,) would not make the attempt, and so confessed their inability. This was a bitter disappointment to the father, and served also to shake his faith in the Master of these weak disciples. Hence after having pathetically described the case of the youth, he says doubtfully, yet imploringly, *If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.* The powerful struggle between faith and unbelief in the mind of this poor man is artlessly but most affectingly portrayed. Jesus had said, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;* and straightway the father of the child CRIED OUT, *and said,* WITH TEARS, *Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief;* that is, increase my faith, by supplying its defects, and removing the doubts which I confess intrude against my better convictions and wishes. He knew so much of Christ that he felt that it was most reasonable in him to exercise an entire trust in his power and goodness; yet the length of time his son had been possessed, the powerful and fearful character of the evil spirit, and the failure of Christ's disciples to cast him out, had rendered the exercise of that entire faith an act of great difficulty. He, however, manfully struggles, and casts himself upon the compassion of Him who "despises not the day of small things;" and his prayer is heard.

Verses 25–27. *He rebuked.*—He *reproved* the malice of the devil, and, with an authority which that *foul spirit* dared not to resist, he *charged* him both *to come out, and,* probably for the greater comfort of the afflicted parent, *to enter no more into him.* He was suffered indeed to exert great power over him before he came out; the object of which was both to show the fearful malignity of these apostate and wholly abandoned spirits, and to

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

30 ¶ [e] And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 ¶ [f] And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who *should be* the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 ¶ [g] And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils

[e] Matt. xvii, 22.—[f] Matt. xviii, 1.

[g] Luke ix, 49.

render the miracle more illustrious before the multitude, especially as the scribes had availed themselves of the weakness of the disciples to depreciate the power of their Master. But the mischief inflicted by Satan was soon repaired: in this terrible parting struggle he had left the youth *as one dead; so that many said, He is dead; but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.*

Verse 28. *Why could not we cast him out?*—See notes on Matt. xvii, 19–21. The reason why the disciples could not cast out the demon was, that they wanted faith in Christ. Here is a grand distinction between the servant and the master. Our Lord's power of working miracles is never attributed to his *faith*: the reason is, that he looked to no higher a power than his own Divinity in essential union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But had he been a mere man, faith in another and a higher power would have been as necessary to his effecting a miracle as to his disciples. What then can explain the fact that faith was every thing to them, nothing to him, in precisely similar acts? Nothing can explain it but the doctrine that they were men, and he more than man.

Verses 30, 31. *And passed through Galilee, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xvii, 22, 23.

Verse 33. *What was it that ye disputed, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xviii, 1, &c.

Verses 36, 37. *And he took a child, &c.*—This was teaching by action, and the lesson was twofold; first to the disciples, that their character ought, in simplicity and freedom from ambition, to be like that of a child; second, that to receive persons of this child-like disposition, the true followers of a lowly Master, would be accompanied by the highest spiritual benefit: such persons, by receiving Christ's servants as such, and out of respect of their relation to him, their resemblance to him, and the work assigned to them by him, would receive both Christ and him that sent him into the world, even *the Father*; which not only means that they would show respect both to the Son and to the Father, but that they should be raised into communion with each, and receive those benefits which, in the economy of our redemption, respectively they bestow upon true believers,—the Father being the FOUNTAIN of all blessings, and the Son the GRAND MEDIUM through which his abounding grace flows to man. This is, as St. John expresses it, to have "the Father and the Son." But although this is doubtless the primary and chief sense of this emblematical action, and the words of Christ which it called forth, the whole transaction shows the interest our Lord took in children, and bears a FAVOURABLE ASPECT upon infant baptism.

Verses 38–40. *And John answered, &c.*—These words appear to have interrupted our Lord's discourse, which is renewed again at verse 41. The man who was casting out devils was a believer in Christ. This is clear from his adjuring the devils *in the name* of Christ, that is, in dependence on his power, and under his authority. That the same miraculous powers which had been given to the twelve, and to the seventy disciples, had been communicated to him, was also clear from the effects produced. But he followed not with them; that is, he was not of the company that immediately attended upon Christ, and to whom John probably thought that the authority to cast out devils in the name of Christ properly belonged. Yet perhaps he had not been called thus immediately to follow Christ; and it is clear that it was

in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: [h] for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

41 [i] For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42 [k] And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 [l] And if thy hand * offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 [m] Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye † offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with

[h] 1 Cor. xii, 3.—[i] Matt. x, 42.—[k] Matt. xviii, 6. [l] Matt. v, 29; xviii, 8.

* Or, *cause thee to offend.*—[m] Isaiah lxvi, 24.
† Or, *cause thee to offend.*

not the will of Christ to restrict the communication of miraculous powers to those who did. Grotius and others have thought that, though well inclined to Christ, he was not "a full believer." There is, however, no proof of his deficiency in this respect, more than this, that he did not follow Christ as the apostles and the seventy. But that this was a fault, since he openly confessed Christ, cannot be proved; and therefore it is not conclusive against his being "a full believer," of which the presumption lies the other way. The fact seems to be that John, like many since, thought that authority to cast out devils in the name of Christ must come in one particular way; but Christ showed that he was bound to no order at all, and that he was so far from making that his only rule, he had conferred as rich a degree of spiritual gifts upon a believer who followed not with the rest, and who especially had not had the same call into the apostolic and evangelical ministry as those whom Christ had chosen. *Forbid him not*, therefore, says our Lord, to the too forward John: *for there is no man that can do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me*; that can easily bring himself to speak evil of me; meaning that such a one could not be an enemy, but a friend. It is therefore added, *For he that is not against us, is on our part.* Such a man could not be against them, because he was engaged in the same work of casting out devils, and honouring the name of Christ as the world's Redeemer from the tyranny of Satan; but, as urging on the same designs of mercy to mankind, he was *for them.* Alas! that this important sentiment has been so disregarded among the different sects of Christians. Even those who have been successfully promoting the salvation of men through Christ, have often been haughtily forbidden, because the order and manner of their calling was different from others. Men would restrain their Master to one rule, and refuse to acknowledge his Spirit where a diversity appears in his operations. Thus blind mortals attempt to limit the Holy One of Israel, and tacitly confess like John, until better instructed, that they would rather the devils were let alone to torment and destroy men, than that they should be cast out in any other manner than their own. Let us, however, recollect that, as there is a common Christianity, so there is a COMMON CAUSE among true Christians; and whoever promotes it is not *against us, but on our part*, if our side be indeed the side of Christ. We are therefore to encourage his work, and not coldly, much less proudly, hinder it; and we are to esteem him also, as well as those that follow with us, "very highly in love for his work's sake." If only the devils are cast out in the name of Jesus, let us rejoice, and thereby show that our love to the common Christianity surmounts the petty attachments of mere party and sectarian feeling.

Verse 41. *For whosoever shall give you a cup, &c.*—Here the discourse, broken off at verse 37, is resumed. See note on Matt. x, 42, where the phrase is similar, though the occasion is different; for our Lord often repeated the same weighty sayings on different occasions.

Verses 42–47. *Offend one of these little ones, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xviii. 6–9.

fire, [n] and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 [o] Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

[n] Lev. ii. 13.

[o] Matt. v. 13.

Verse 48. *Where their worm dieth not, &c.*—These words are similar to Isaiah lxvi, 24; but even there they may be used as a proverbial description of hopeless and utter destruction, and so there may be no application of them by our Lord, except as the expression was well known as proverbial.—Bishop Lowth and others think the allusion in Isaiah is to the valley of Hinnom, where the idolatrous Jews made their children to pass through the fire to Moloch. Josiah desecrated or defiled it; and it was the custom to keep fires perpetually burning there to consume the filth and offal of the city. See note on Matt. v, 22. This might, indeed, explain the allusion to *unquenchable fire*, but not that to the *worm that dieth not;* and the notion of Lowth that this valley was also a common burying place, and so furnished the image of the ever gnawing worm, as well as that of the everlasting fire, is without sufficient proof. In so polluted a place the Jews were unlikely to bury their dead. The passage occurs indeed in Isaiah, before any such use was made of the valley as burning the refuse of the city. It appears therefore to have been a highly metaphorical mode of expressing the highest penalties of the Divine justice upon guilty nations and individuals. As the worm itself dies not, but destroys that it feeds upon, and as a fire unquenched consumes that upon which it kindles, so when temporal judgments are expressed by this phrase, the utter destruction of persons, cities, and nations, appears to be intended; but when it refers to a future state, and the subject of punishment is, in itself, or by Divine appointment, immortal, the idea is heightened to its utmost terror; *their worm* of reflection and remorse ever gnaws; and *the fire*, which represents the severity of accumulated judgments, is never quenched. Three times here does this most mild and gracious Teacher repeat this awful commination against those who refuse to put away those sins which *offend them*, that is, cause them to stumble and fall. And though the excision of them may appear like cutting off a hand or foot, or plucking out an eye, yet the necessity is laid upon us: we must deny ourselves and mortify our sins, or be exposed to this fearful, this ever enduring misery. See notes on Matt. v, 29, 30, and xviii, 8, 9.

Verses 49, 50. *For every one shall be salted with fire, &c.*—On this difficult passage the opinions of commentators have greatly differed. It is unnecessary to notice many absurd and some mischievous interpretations, which carry their own refutation. those which have the greatest plausibility are the following. It is necessary, however, to state previously, that, although the Codex Bezæ wants the first clause of this verse, and some other MSS. omit the second, yet the evidence of the genuineness of the whole verse from the agreement of the best MSS. and ancient versions is decisive. The first opinion regards these words as wholly unconnected with the preceding remarks on the punishment of the wicked; and as expressing the fiery persecutions to which Christians would be exposed. A second is, that πας, *every one*, respects all Christians, whether persecuted or not; and that the sense is, every true believer is purified by the afflictions and trials of life, in the same manner (και being used for ως) *as* every sacrifice is salted with salt. A third is, that believers were to be salted or prepared by the apostles, *for the fire* of God's altar, (πυρι being here taken in the dative case,) that is, to become through their ministry a holy sacrifice to God. A fourth urges that γαρ connects the words chiefly with the preceding verse, and therefore that the words *salted with fire*, can refer only to the wicked, to them whose "worm dieth not," &c.; γαρ *for every one of these* shall be salted with fire; as if it had been, πας γαρ αυτων. In this case, the idea of endless torments suggested by *the unquenchable fire* of the preceding verse is supposed to be carried on and heightened by the strong figure of being *salted*, that is, *seasoned* with fire itself, so as to be rendered inconsumable by it. The fifth view, and that which has been perhaps most generally received, regards the two clauses of the verse as standing in opposition to each other; the first expressing the fearful doom of the wicked as victims to Divine justice, to be salted with fire, which shall endure for ever; but every acceptable sacrifice,—under which real Christians are supposed to be represented,—as being salted with another kind of salt, namely, the Divine grace, which purifies the soul. These are all the opinions on this subject worth noticing, the others being either modifications of some one of these, or founded upon emendatory and uncertain criticism.

For the true interpretation of this passage it is to be remarked, that the discourse was addressed to the apostles alone. Our Lord had reproved them for their ambition, by setting a child in the midst, and taking him in his arms in token of his special regard; he had farther declared his affection to such

of his childlike followers, by assuring them that whoso received *one of such children* received him; he had reproved John for forbidding a good man who followed not with them from casting out devils in his name; he had, in returning from this digression to the former subject, declared that the most severe punishment would follow the *offending*, or making to stumble, *one of these little ones* that *believe in me:* having guarded others against offending, or causing to stumble and fall, the least of his disciples, he warns the apostles lest they should be stumbling blocks to themselves, enjoining upon them the utmost purity, exhorting them to renounce every sin by entire and rigid self-mortification, which he compares to the cutting off *a hand or a foot*, or the plucking out of *an eye;* and this entire renunciation of evil, this universal purity, he enforces upon them by the awful doctrine, that, failing of it, they could not *enter into life*, but should inevitably be cast into unquenchable fire. But in what follows he continues the same address to the apostles, and still enforces the same subject, their entire purification from sin to God, which he illustrates from the offering of salt with sacrifices. The apostles professed to CONSECRATE themselves to Christ, to OFFER themselves to his service; but as under the law all offerings were to be accompanied with *salt*,—the striking and well understood emblem in eastern countries of SINCERITY and GOOD FAITH in covenant engagements, and hence called in the very passage alluded to, Lev. ii, 13, "the salt of the covenant of thy God,"—so their devoting themselves to Christ demanded that perfect sincerity and purity which could not consist with the sparing and retaining any sin whatever; and the sincerity and good faith with which they renounced all sin was as the offering of salt with the sacrifice. This appears to be the connection; and the particle γαρ must therefore be considered as connecting these words, not with the verse next preceding, but with the whole argument of the preceding verses; and the πας is to be applied to every one of the apostles: for, that in the first instance they are spoken of, and that the *salting* refers to the principle and operation of Divine grace in them, is made plain by what follows, *Salt is good;* where our Lord means the very salt of which he had before been speaking, that with which every sacrifice should be salted. To which he also adds, *Have salt in yourselves, and*, with reference to their dispute which should be greatest, *have peace one with another.* So clear is it that, throughout the whole of this disputed passage, the apostles were addressed, and they first and chiefly, whatever lessons may be consequentially taught by it to ministers and Christians generally; and if so, then the only point to be considered is, whether the first clause, *for every one shall be salted with fire*, may not refer to the punishment of a false apostle, or a bad minister, although the next clause, *and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*, must be considered as a figurative application of the rites of ancient sacrifice, to express the entire consecration of the faithful disciples to Christ, as by "a covenant of salt." On this question it may be observed that the never ending punishment of the faithless had been with such reiteration, explicitness, and emphasis already three times, or rather six times, uttered in the preceding verses, that it is improbable that the same subject should be again stated in the garb of metaphor as being "salted with fire." 2. That to suppose our Lord, in the same verse, to speak of being salted with the fire of hell, and salted with Divine grace, is an exceedingly harsh interpretation: for although he often uses the same terms in a sentence, or in successive sentences, in different or even contrasted senses, yet there is always some observable relation of degree or contrariety arising out of the terms or the nature of the subject; but here no such relation appears, and we shall not find an instance of such a use of words by our Lord in senses so violently different and disconnected. But 3. The terms being all manifestly *sacrificial*, an easy interpretation is afforded to the whole, without supposing any such violent transition in the meaning of the terms used: *For every one shall be salted*, by an entire integrity and sincerity, WITH THE FIRE of that altar on which you devote yourselves, as *every sacrifice* in the temple *shall be salted with salt*, the emblem of the sincerity and integrity in which it is offered. Here πυρι is taken in the dative case, as 2 Pet. iii, 7, πρυι τηρουμενοι, *reserved for the fire;* and και takes the sense of ως, which is not unfrequent.

At the same time, the order in which these distinct ideas rose in the mind of our Lord may be probably traced. The "unquenchable fire" of hell, of which he had been just speaking, might easily associate itself with another unquenchable fire, that which was kept ever burning through all generations on the altar of burnt-offering in the temple. Still farther, the punishment of wicked apostate Christians might naturally be considered as the immolation of victims to Divine justice, and forcibly suggest the striking contrast of that great act of grace by which true apostles and disciples were allowed to offer themselves to God upon the altar of the Christian temple, and to present themselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, to God; but the acceptableness of which depends, as in the ancient offerings, upon *the salt* offered with it, that is, upon the entire

simplicity and fidelity with which we give our whole selves to Christ and to his service, making no reserves and tolerating no sin. In this way, indeed, the admonitory contrast, so forcibly dwelt upon by some commentators, is brought out and impressed upon us; not by separating the two clauses of verse 46 into distinct and opposite senses, but by opposing the *false* disciple, who refuses to cut off his right hand, or foot, or eye, that is, wholly and universally to mortify his corruptions, and is cast into hell, a victim to incensed and eternal justice; and the *faithful* disciple, he who enters into "a covenant of salt" with Christ, that is, who engages himself to him in purity and fidelity, and who is offered upon the altar, a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour, in all he thinks, and speaks, and does, "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." In this view, it is very true that we must be sacrifices either to GRACE or to JUSTICE. Let us not falter then in our choice, but *cut off* whatever might cause us to stumble, and fall into this unquenchable fire.

If the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it?—See notes on Matt v, 13.

CHAPTER X.

2 Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement: 13 blesseth the children that are brought unto him: 17 resolveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting: 23 telleth his disciples of the danger of riches: 28 promiseth rewards to them that forsake any thing for the Gospel: 32 foretelleth his death and resurrection: 35 biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him: 46 and restoreth to Bartimeus his sight.

1 [a] AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*.

11 And he saith unto them, [b] Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ¶ [c] And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

17 ¶ [d] And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is* God.

[a] Matt. xix, 1.—[b] Matt. v, 32; xix, 9.

[c] Matt. xix, 13.—[d] Matt. xix, 16.

CHAPTER X. Verse 2. *Is it lawful, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xix, 3–12.

Verse 13. *They brought young children, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xix, 13–15.

Verse 14. *For of such is the kingdom of God.*—A more correct translation would be, *For to such belongeth the kingdom of God.*

Verse 17. *Good Master, &c.*—See Matt. xix, 16, &c.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 ¶ [e] Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's,

30 But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 [f] But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

32 ¶ [g] And they were in the way go-

[e] Matt. xix, 27.

[f] Matt. xix, 30.—[g] Matt. xx, 17.

Verse 23. *How hardly shall they that have riches, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xix, 23, 24.

Verse 24. *Them that trust in riches, &c.*—This seems to explain our Lord's meaning as to the obstructions which riches present to piety. They naturally lead those who possess them *to trust* in them, that is, to expect ease and satisfaction of mind from them, and to depend upon the security which they seem to give, to the destruction of that sense of dependence upon God which leads to prayer and constant reference to him in our thoughts and purposes. Where this is the case there can be no spirituality of taste and discernment; the mind becomes animal and earthly, and can have no desire for the kingdom of God, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Verse 27. *With men it is impossible, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xix, 26.

Verse 30. *A hundredfold now in this present time, &c.*—See note on Matt. xix, 29. Μετα διωγμων, *with persecutions*, is added to indicate that our Lord is not speaking strictly of a hundredfold reward of external felicity to be enjoyed in this life; for whatever the promise might imply, still they were to be liable to persecutions. This shows the importance of this clause as elucidatory of our Lord's meaning, although some critics have stumbled at it, and would conjecturally amend it into μετα διωγμον, after "the persecution has ceased," without the least authority. Besides, the very phrase shows that the words are to be understood mystically, since of some things we can have but one; as, for instance, a mother, while mothers a hundredfold are yet promised. Yet are we not so to restrict the promise to spiritual consolation and advantages as to forget that even in this life those who willingly "lose" for Christ's sake, often "find" advantages which at the time they could not expect. Here, as the early persecutions were of such a nature as often to deprive the believers of their natural relatives, who forsook and renounced them, so the compensation in the new and better friends which Christianity prepared for them may be glanced at. Thus, as one observes, "when the apostles left their own houses, the houses of all the faithful were open to them; so that, instead of one small dwelling, they had a hundred houses,—*ut loco unius ædiculæ centum habuerunt domos.* The lands of all the faithful ministered to them fruits and necessaries; 'having nothing,' as St. Paul says, 'they possessed all things;' and instead of one father, one mother, and a few brothers and sisters, they found a hundred of the faithful regarding them with paternal, maternal, and brotherly affection." Chiefly, however, no doubt, does the promise, says Mr. Bolton, respect "spiritual joy in an enlarged measure, peace of conscience, contentment of soul, more familiarity with God, more communion with Jesus Christ, full assurance of

ing up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him.

33 *Saying*, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

35 ¶ [h] And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they say unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, [i] Ye know that they which *are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

46 ¶ [k] And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highwayside begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath †made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

[h] Matt. xx, 20.—[i] Luke xxii, 25.

* Or, *think good*.—[k] Matt. xx, 29.—† Or, *saved thee*.

his love, more sensible experience of his all-sufficiency, sweeter taste in the promises, &c.; one drop of which spiritual refreshing dews distilling upon the soul, even in the greatest outward distress; one glimpse of such glorious inward joys shining from the face of the sun of salvation into the saddest heart, into the darkest dungeon; doth incredibly surpass all the comfort which wife, children, wealth, or, in a word, all worldly good, or mortal greatness, can possibly yield."

Verse 31. *Many that are first shall be last.*—Many who promise to endure persecutions with confidence shall lose the martyr's crown through a base cowardice: *and the last first*, persons not esteemed as of high and solid attainments, yet shall show that the judgment of man, nay, the judgment of the Church, is often fallacious; and shall come forth as unshrinking confessors of Christ, to prison and to death.

Verses 32–34. *They were amazed.*—See notes on Matt. xx, 17–19.

Verses 35–45. *And James and John, &c.* See notes on Matt. xx, 20, &c.

Verse 46. *Blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highwayside begging.*—See the notes on Matt. xx, 29, &c.

Verse 51. *Lord, that I might receive, &c.*—The word rendered Lord, is here Rabboni, and is a term of the greatest reverence

CHAPTER XI.

1 Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem: 12 curseth the fruitless leafy tree: 15 purgeth the temple: 20 exhorteth his disciples to steadfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies: 27 and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.

1 And [a] when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

12 ¶ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 [b] And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he

[a] Matt. xxi. 1.

[b] Matt. xxi, 19.

CHAPTER XI. Verse 1. *And when they came nigh unto Jerusalem, &c.*—On this whole transaction, the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, see the notes on Matt. xxi, 1–11. St. Matthew says, "an ass tied, and a colt with her." St. Mark only mentions the colt, and adds, *whereon never man sat.*—By bringing the ass the colt followed by natural instinct; but our Lord used only the colt, on which no man had sat. In ancient times, both among Jews and heathens, animals unused by man were selected for sacred uses. Thus the Philistines put two milch kine, "on which had come no yoke," to the cart in which they sent back the ark.—See also Deuteronomy xxi, 3. Oxen never yoked, *injuges boves*, were sacrificed to Minerva.

Verse 10. *The kingdom of our father David.*—That is, the kingdom of Messiah promised to David, and which was to be perpetual in the person of his great son and descendant, THE CHRIST. Of the spiritual nature of this kingdom, these exulting multitudes, however, had no conception, and were soon to be offended in him because of his cross.

Verse 13. *A fig tree.*—See note on Matt. xxi, 19. In addition to what is there said, it may be observed, that it has been made a difficulty against the interpretation there given, that the last clause of this verse, *for the time of figs*, the time of gathering figs, the fig harvest, *was not yet*, is given as a reason why our Lord found nothing but leaves. But it is rather given as a reason of the barrenness of the tree, and would be so understood by all who knew the nature of the fig tree, which puts forth fruit even before its leaf; and so for a tree of this kind to have leaves would indicate that its fruit was well advanced toward maturity, if not barren. If, indeed, the full time of gathering figs had been come, the tree having leaves would have been no proof of its barrenness, because the fruit might have been already gathered; but as the fig harvest had not arrived, the hopeless barrenness of the tree was demonstrated from the very circumstance of its having leaves, which is the reason why the circumstance of the time of gathering figs not being come is stated. This is sufficient to remove the difficulty, and renders it unnecessary to take, as several critics have done, the clause from

came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

15 ¶ [c] And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 ¶ [d] And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, * Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 [e] Therefore I say unto you, What

[c] Matt. xxi, 12.—[d] Matt. xxi, 19.

* Or, *have the faith of God.*—[e] Matt. vii, 7.

και ελθων to *φυλλα*, parenthetically; which, however, may be done without violence.—The words will then read, "And seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; (and being come, he found nothing but leaves;) for the time of figs was not yet." Instances of this kind of trajection are occasionally found in the gospels as well as in other Greek writers; and one especially has been pointed out in this evangelist himself, chap. xvi, 3, 4, "Who shall roll us away the stone? and when they looked, the stone was rolled away: for it was very great;" where the greatness of the stone certainly is not the reason why it was rolled away, but the reason of the preceding question, "Who shall roll us away the stone?"

Verse 15. *Cast out them that sold and bought, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xxi, 12, 13.

Verse 17. *My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.*—The sense is, "a house of prayer to, or for, all nations," agreeably to Isaiah lvi, 7, from which it is quoted, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." As our Lord forbade them to carry any vessel or burden of any kind through the temple, which the Jews themselves were careful not to do in those parts of it where they themselves worshipped, it is probable that all this worldly traffic and profane secularity was carried on in the court of the Gentiles, which, through their contempt of other nations, and their own pride, they did not consider as holy.—This indeed appears from the inscription which was placed upon the wall which separated the court of the Jews from that of the Gentiles: "No alien, *αλλοφυλον*, shall enter the holy place." Thus, in opposition to God's original appointment, by which a court for those Gentiles and strangers, who came to worship him, was appointed, and consecrated and made holy with the rest of the building, the Jews of our Lord's time desecrated it, and treated it as a common place, in pure enmity to Gentiles, even though worshippers of the same God; and, as though to discourage all such pious foreigners from going up to the temple, disturbed their devotions by worldly noise, and frowned upon their piety with haughty contempt. Our Lord treats this hypocritical bigotry, this proud, exclusive self-righteousness, with just severity; claims a hallowed seclusion from noisy interruption for the pious Gentiles in their own court, and reminds the Jews, from one of their own prophets himself, that God had made his house a house of prayer for all nations, *πασι τοις εθνεσιν*, for all Gentiles. The latter part of the verse is quoted with great force of reproof from Jeremiah vii, 11: "Is this house, which is called by my name, become a DEN OF ROBBERS in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord."

Verse 22. *Have faith in God.*—*Θεου* is a genitive of the object, as in Rom. iii, 22.

Verse 24. *What things soever ye desire, &c.*—This is a general encouragement added, as in St. Matthew, to what is said as to the faith by which miracles were wrought. See note on Matt. xxi, 21. It is, however, expressed a little more fully by St. Mark, *What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall*

things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

25 And when ye stand praying, [f] forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: [g] and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one * question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

[f] Matt. vi, 14.—[g] Matt. xxi, 23.

* Or, *thing*.

have them. An ill use has sometimes been made of this passage, as though it meant that, when praying, whatever we believe, that is, persuade ourselves that we receive, we do receive,—an absurdity and a self-contradiction. Here, however, *to believe*, does not signify to persuade ourselves into an opinion; but to trust, or to have faith in God. This trust must necessarily be regulated by God's own PROMISE and WARRANT, and it is exercised *in order* that we may receive.—The sense therefore is, *believe*, trust, *that ye shall receive them*, and *ye shall obtain them*; that is, all things which God both expressly promises, and which are, as St. John states, "according to his will."

Verse 25. *And when ye stand praying, forgive.*—See notes on Matthew vi, 12, 14, 15.

Verse 28. *By what authority doest thou these things?*—See notes on Matthew xxi, 23–27.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foretelleth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.* 13 *He avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians, about paying tribute to Cesar:* 18 *convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection:* 28 *resolveth the scribe, who questioned of the first commandment:* 35 *refuteth the opinion that the scribes held of Christ:* 38 *bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy:* 41 *and commendeth the poor widow for her two mites, above all.*

1 And [a] he began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about *it*, and digged *a place for* the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

[a] St. Matthew, chap. xxi, 33.

CHAPTER XII. Verses 1–12. *A certain man, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xxi, 33–46.

Verses 13–17. *Certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words*—See the notes on Matt. xxii, 16–22.

Verse 18. *Sadducees, which say there is*

8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 [b] And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

13 ¶ [c] And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a *penny, that I may see *it*.

16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

18 ¶ [d] Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

28 ¶ [e] And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

31 And the second *is* like, *namely*,

[b] Psa. cxviii, 22.—[c] Matt. xxii, 15.—* Valuing of our money sevenpence halfpenny, as Matt. xviii, 28.

[d] Matt. xxii, 23.—[e] Matt. xxii, 35.

no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, &c.—See notes on Matt. xxii, 23–33.

Verse 28. *One of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together.*—The only difference between St. Mark and St. Matthew here is, that the latter quotes the passage from Deut. vi, 4, 5, short; the former, no doubt as our Lord spoke it, in full, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love," &c. St. Matthew wrote in the first place for the Jews, to whom this partial mode of quoting would suggest the whole passage which was put into their phylacteries, and repeated twice a day. See notes on Matt. xxii, 36, &c.

Verse 30. *Thou shalt love the Lord, &c.*—St. Mark adds to "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," as the words stand in Matthew, *with all thy strength*, conformably to Deut. vi, 5, and 2 Kings xxiii, 25. To love God with all our *might* or *strength*, is to have all our faculties raised to their best pitch, and employed in their utmost vigour in his service.

this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribes said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

35 ¶ [f] And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, [g] The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 ¶ And he said unto them in his doctrine, [h] Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the market places,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 [i] Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

41 ¶ [k] And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast * money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor

[f] Matt. xxii, 41.—[g] Psalm cx, 1.—[h] Matt. xxiii, 5.

[i] Matt. xxiii, 14.—[k] Luke xxi, 1.—* A piece of brass money. See Matt. x, 29.

Verses. 32–34. *Well, Master, &c.*—St. Mark adds this reply of the scribe, who respectfully salutes him as rabbi, and acknowledges that the love of God and our neighbour *is more*, more acceptable to God, *than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices*. In this our Lord acknowledges that the scribe *answered discreetly*, *νουνεχως*, *judiciously*, with proper knowledge of the subject, and pronounced that *he was not far from the kingdom of God*; that is, that his principles well corresponded with those of Christ's doctrine, and that holding them he was in a state of preparation to embrace it.

Verse 35. *How say the scribes, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xxii, 41–45.

Verse 36. *By the Holy Ghost.*—The articles here are cancelled by Griesbach, Tittman, and others, on the authority of many of the best MSS. But should the textual emendation be allowed, the sense is the same; for not to urge that *πνευμα*, and *πνευμα αγιον*, in the undoubted sense of the Holy Spirit, are often found in the New Testament, no meaning can be attached to the passage if the term be taken in any other sense. For what possible sense can be attached to David's calling the Messiah Lord in Spirit, unless this be meant of the Holy Spirit?

Verse 37. *And the common people heard him gladly.*—They heard him with delight, both silence the learned objectors who came to dispute with him, whether Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, or scribes; and propose questions to them, as in the preceding verse, which they could not answer. For as these things indicated the superiority of his wisdom, so they gave weight and authority to those salutary and heart-felt truths which men of simple minds delighted to hear from him, and which stood in so direct a contrast to the vain and heartless doctrines which they had been accustomed to hear from the scribes.

Verse 38. *Beware of the scribes, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xxiii, 5–7.

Long clothing.—Sweeping and stately robes, *στολαι*.

Verse 40. *Widows' houses.*—See notes on Matt. xxii, 14.

Verse 41. *Over against the treasury.*—In the second court of the temple there were thirteen chests placed to receive offerings for sacred uses, and an inscription upon each, denoting to what the offerings contained in it were to be applied. The name treasury, *γαζοφυλακιον*, was applied to that part of the court where the chests were placed. Every one was to cast into the treasury whatever he would, much or little, provided it was not less than two *prutahs*, the smallest Hebrew coin, and rendered by us *mites*.

How the people cast money.—The word is *χαλκος*, properly brass money, but sometimes used as a term for money in general. These offerings were principally made at the three great feasts; and on this occasion it is added, *many that were rich cast in much*.

Verse 42. *Two mites.*—The mite, *λεπτον*, was the Hebrew *prutah*, two of which was the lowest offering permitted to be made; the value was about three halfpence of our

widow, and she threw in two * mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

* It is the seventh part of one piece of that brass money.

money; but according to some calculations of the value of ancient coin, the mite was not equal in value to our farthing, so that the two would not be a halfpenny.

Verse 43. *Hath cast more in, &c.*—The reason is given in the next verse: the others had *cast in of their abundance;* it was a part only of a considerable superfluity which they offered to God; *but she of her want, υστερησεως, her poverty, did cast in all she had, even all her living;* that is, all she had to support her life for the day. Proportionably, therefore, her gifts were greater than those of others; but greater also because, as springing from a more unequivocal principle of pious regard to the worship of God, indicating greater love, as being willing to sacrifice even the necessaries of the day to glorify God in his sanctuary, and greater faith in Providence to supply her wants, and not suffer her to perish.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple:* 9 *the persecutions of the Gospel:* 10 *that the Gospel must be preached to all nations:* 14 *that great calamities shall happen to the Jews:* 24 *and the manner of his coming to judgment:* 32 *the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided when he cometh to each one particularly by death.*

1 And [a] as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 [b] Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you:

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ;* and shall deceive many.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall* not *be* yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of † sorrows.

9 ¶ But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and

[a] Matt. xxiv, 1.—[b] Matt. xxiv, 3.

† The word in the original importeth, *the pains of a woman in travail.*

CHAPTER XIII. In this chapter St. Mark gives an abridgment of the discourse delivered by our Lord, as recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew; on which, see the notes. On a few passages, only, where variety presents itself, will it be necessary to add any remark.

Verse 1. *What manner of stones.*—Many of them were of white marble, twenty-five cubits long, eight broad, and twelve deep; the cubit being about twenty-two inches of our measure. *And what buildings!* Not merely the temple, but the edifices connected with it; and very probably the terraces built to enlarge Mount Moriah and support the temple, of three hundred cubits high.

Verse 9. *They shall deliver you up to councils.*—The sanhedrim, or great council, or the inferior councils of twenty-one, or that of three, attached to each synagogue.

In the synagogues ye shall be beaten.—The synagogues were courts of justice as well as places of worship; and the punishment of "forty stripes save one" was inflicted in them. The more correct rendering of

in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 [c] But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 ¶ [d] But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 [e] And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not:

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 ¶ [f] But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

32 ¶ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 [g] Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

[c] Matt. x, 19.—[d] Matt. xxiv, 15.

the verse, however, is, *for they shall deliver you up to councils and to synagogues*, and *ye shall be beaten*.

Rulers and kings.—*Governors* of provinces, as Felix and Festus; and *kings*, as Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, &c. *For a testimony against them*, against their errors, idolatries, and persecuting cruelty; and even the very blood of the innocent cries out against an unjust judge. The fate of persecutors, whether individuals or nations, is a striking comment upon these words.

[e] Matt. xxiv, 23.—[f] Matt. xxiv, 29.—[g] Matt. xxiv, 42.

Verse 11. *But when they shall lead you.*—Οταν δε αγαγωσιν υμας, a forensic phrase, signifying prosecute you, and arraign you before the bar. So *agere*, and *actio*, among the Latins.

Take no thought beforehand.—See notes on Matt. x, 17, &c. These words, first used on a former occasion, but with reference to precisely the same circumstances, were here repeated.

Neither premeditate.—Μελεταν signifies to compose a speech by previous study.

34 *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Verse 19. *From the beginning of the creation which God created.*—St. Matthew says simply "the beginning of the world." The meaning is the same, only more emphatic.

Verse 32. *But of that day and hour, &c.*—See note on Matt. xxiv, 36.

Verse 34. *For the Son of man, &c.*—This parable is in substance the same as several recorded by other evangelists; but differs somewhat in circumstances. *Authority* is given to the servants, that is, power to trade with and improve certain portions of the master's property; a usual mode of employing servants in the east, during the absence of the master: and *to every man his work*, so that none was suffered to be idle; which may teach us that there is a work for each of us, and if we know it not, we are either blind or idle, but cannot be held guiltless upon our Lord's return. And among the rest, *the porter was commanded to watch*, lest the mansion should be broken open, and the goods damaged or stolen. This was his employ. All the servants being thus appointed to their posts, as in a well ordered family, they were commanded to *watch*, that is, to be always attentive to this certain result, that their master would return, though at an uncertain time, to call every servant to account, and deal with him according to his conduct. See the notes on Matt. xxv, 14–30.

Verse 35. *Cockcrowing*—Here denotes the third watch of the night, or three o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *A conspiracy against Christ.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed of one of his disciples:* 22 *after the passover prepared, and eaten, instituteth his supper:* 26 *declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth him with a kiss. He is apprehended in the garden,* 53 *falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council:* 65 *shamefully abused by them:* 66 *and thrice denied of Peter.*

1 AFTER [a] two days was *the feast of* the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

2 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3 ¶ [b] And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of *spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred † pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath

[a] Matt. xxvi, 2.—[b] Matt. xxvi, 6.

*Or, *pure nard*, or, *liquid nard*.—† See Matt. xviii, 28.

CHAPTER XIV. Verse 3. *An alabaster box of ointment of spikenard.*—The plant from which this oil was made is called *narda spicata*, and the oil, *unguentum nardi spicatæ*. It was often adulterated, which caused stress to be laid upon any allusion to it when pure: *pura distillans tempora nardo*. Here St. Mark uses the term πιστικης, *genuine, unadulterated*; and therefore adds πολυτελους, *of great value*. This was done in honour

done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

10 ¶ [c] And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 ¶ [d] And the first day of unleavened bread, when they * killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 [e] And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me, shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is* it I? and another *said*, *Is* it I?

20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 ¶ [f] And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 ¶ And when they had sung a †hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 [g] And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 [h] But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this

[c] Matt. xxvi, 14.—[d] Matt. xxvi, 17.—† Or, *sacrificed*.
[e] Matt. xxvi, 20.

[f] Matt. xxvi, 26.—† Or, *psalm*.—[g] Matt. xxvi, 31
[h] Matt. xxvi, 33.

of our Lord's character, and expressed the highest sense of its dignity. On this transaction see the notes on Matt. xxvi, 6–13.

Verse 12. *When they killed the passover.*—See the notes on Matt. xxvi, 17, &c.

Verse 13. *A man with a pitcher of water, &c.*—In St. Matthew it is, "Go into the city to such a man," meaning, no doubt, not any person described by name and residence, but such a one as should be indicated by some sign. This sign was, meeting a man *bearing a vessel of water*, no doubt a servant of the host upon whose house our Lord had fixed; for this servant they were commanded to follow, so that they were to fix upon the house into which he should turn; and *say to the owner of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, &c.*—This mode of address shows that the man knew Christ, and was himself probably either a disciple or a friend. The *καταλυμα*, guest chambers, were prepared by the Jews resident in Jerusalem, for those who came up to celebrate the passover, without any remuneration except the skins of the lambs sacrificed.

Verse 15. *A large upper room furnished.*—Εστρωμενον, that is, having the couches round the table, spread with their proper cushions and coverings for the guests to recline upon, after their manner of eating at table.

Verse 18. *One of you which eateth with me, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xxvi, 21, &c.

Verse 27. *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.*—See notes on Matt. xxvi, 31.

Verse 30. *This day, even in this night,*

night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

32 [i] And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 ¶ [k] And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

46 ¶ And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body;* and the young men laid hold on him:

[i] Matt. xxvi, 36.

[k] Matt. xxvi, 47.

before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.—With the Jews the day commenced at six in the evening; *the day* therefore had then begun; and extended through the natural night, and the day following to the same hour in the evening.

Verse 32. *Gethsemane.*—See notes on Matt. xxvi, 36–46.

Verse 36. *Abba, Father.*—In Matthew it is simply Father. The word used by our Lord would be *Abba,* and St. Mark retains this and adds ὁ πατηρ, as the explanation; hence, the latter is in the nominative, not in the vocative.

Verse 43. *Cometh Judas, one of the twelve.*—See the note on Matt. xxvi, 47, &c.

Verse 51. *There followed him a certain young man, &c.*—Who this young man might be has given rise to many conjectures. Some have thought St. John, others St. James; some an accidental spectator, roused out of sleep by the tumult; others a Roman soldier not on duty. Against his being an apostle or one of the disciples it is urged that in the preceding verse it is said, *And they all forsook him and fled.* Still if he stood in no relation to Christ and his disciples, no reason seems to appear why the incident should be mentioned, or why there was an attempt made to arrest him. The probability is, that he was one of the apostles, one who, upon recovering from his first alarm, took heart and followed Christ. Both Peter and John did this, but no others; and as John was younger than Peter, he was most probably the person. The sindon, or linen cloth, was either a night robe, or the regular outer garment; probably the former, as it is particularly noticed. Laying hold of him shows the eagerness of the officers to apprehend the disciple as well as the Master; and his hasty flight, leaving his

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53 [l] And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 [m] And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.

56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed!

62 And Jesus said, I am: [n] and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any farther witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66 ¶ [o] And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72 [p] And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, * he wept.

[l] Matt. xxvi, 57.—[m] Matt. xxvii, 59.—[n] Matt. xxiv, 30.

[o] Matt. xxvi, 69.—[p] Matt. xxvi, 75.—* Or, *he wept abundantly*, or, *he began to weep*.

linen robe in their hands, the fear created by their furious temper. The reason for noticing the incident is therefore apparent.

Verse 52. *And fled from them naked.*—To be naked does not always, in Scripture, signify to be without all clothing; but only without the upper robe.

Verse 53. *And they led Jesus away to the high priest.*—See the notes on Matt. xxvi, 57–75.

Verse 72. *And when he thought thereon, he wept.*—Some take επιβαλλω here in the sense of throwing the robe over the head or face, which was often done by deeply affected mourners; so that it would be, *covering himself with his robe, he wept.* Others render, *he wept abundantly*, or, *he began to weep*, or, *and rushing out, he wept.* Wetstein and Campbell support our translation, *when he thought thereon;* and Kypke adduces examples from Greek authors in support of this interpretation.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate. 15 Upon the clamour of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified. 17 He is crowned with thorns, 19 spit on, and mocked: 21 fainteth in bearing his cross: 27 hangeth between two thieves: 29 suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews: 39 but confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God: 43 and is honourably buried by Joseph.

1 AND [a] straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4 [b] And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 ¶ And *so* Pilate willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him* to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*,

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did, spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 [c] And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a scull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

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[a] Matt. xxvii, 1.—[b] Matt. xxvii, 13.

[c] Matt. xxvii, 32.

CHAPTER XV. For observations on the transactions of this chapter, see the notes on Matt. xxvii.

Verse 16. *Prætorium.*—The residence of the Roman governor, formerly the palace of Herod. It was at the prætorium that justice was administered.

Verse 24. *And when they had crucified him.*—In the very next verse St. Mark repeats, *and they crucified him*; which repetition is improbable and perplexing. *Και σταυρωσαντες αυτον* may be taken to signify the commencement of the action: "Proceeding to crucify him, they divided his garments."

Verse 25. *And it was the third hour.*—Nine in the morning. St. John says six; but it has been argued on the authority of

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves: the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, [d] And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, [e] Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 ¶ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 There were also women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, [f] followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

42 ¶ [g] And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were

[d] Isaiah liii, 12.—[e] Matt. xxvii, 46.

[f] Luke viii, 3.—[g] Matt. xxvii, 57.

some MSS., that the true reading there is *three*. But without having recourse to this, even St. John is indefinite in his mode of expression, ωρα ωσει εκτη, *almost*, or *about the sixth hour*, which would indicate a period between the third and sixth hours, but approaching the last, or noon. Now as the Jews divided the day into four portions, which were their hours of sacrifice and prayer,—the third, from sunrise, or our nine; the sixth, or our noon; and the ninth, or our three in the afternoon; which hours on feast days were distinguished by the sound of a trumpet; and whatever happened between these stated hours of prayer, was referred sometimes to the preceding, and sometimes to the concluding hour, it would be equally correct, though not equally definite, to say such an event happened in the third hour, or about, that is, *near*, the sixth; the portion of time introduced by the third hour not terminating till the sixth came in. Thus the discrepancy is removed; but St. John, by fixing the time of the crucifixion to that portion between the third and the sixth hours, which approached the sixth hour, has expressed himself with more exactness, though apparently more indefinitely.

Verse 42. *That is, the day before the Sabbath.*—St. Mark writing *for* the use of Gentiles, explains παρασκευη, *the preparation*, by προσαββατον, the day before the Sabbath, when they *prepared*, what was necessary for use, that they might keep the Sabbath holy.

Verse 43. *An honourable counsellor.*—He was a member of the sanhedrim, and a resident in Jerusalem, as appears from his having a tomb there. He is called HONOURABLE, ευσχημων, not in respect of his station merely, but his character and influence. He *waited for the kingdom of God*, or, literally, who "himself also was waiting for the kingdom of God;" so that he was a believer in the claims of our Lord, but *waited* for a fuller manifestation of his character, purposes, and kingdom. This too, in him, if not quite unmixed with Jewish prejudices, must have been in no low degree a spiritual expectation, since his hopes were not extinguished by the very crucifixion of him whom he believed to be the Messiah.

Went in boldly.—That is, *having taken*

already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid.

courage, τολμησας, went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. It surely required *courage* to profess reverential regard to one whom the sanhedrim had condemned as a blasphemer, and Pilate as a traitor and a rebel. Yet he went, trusting in God, and probably the somewhat uneasy conscience of Pilate disposed him the more readily to permit respect being shown to the remains of one whom, though knowing him to be innocent, he had delivered to death.

Verse 44. *And Pilate marvelled.*—He was amazed to hear that he was already dead, and therefore to be assured of it, sent for the centurion to attest it. The reality of the death of our Lord, on which so much depended, was therefore confirmed by many striking occurrences. 1. The omission of the Roman soldiers to break his legs. 2. The assertion of the fact by Joseph, a man of rank and a counsellor, before Pilate. 3. The testimony of the centurion, who had the charge of the execution, upon the interrogation of the governor.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women. 9 Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene: 12 to two going into the country: 14 then to the apostles, 15 whom he sendeth forth to preach the Gospel: 19 and ascendeth into heaven.

1 And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 [a] And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 [b] And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples

[a] Luke xxiv, 1; John xx, 1.

[b] John xx, 11.

CHAPTER XVI. Verse 1. *And when the Sabbath was past.*—See the notes on Matthew xxviii, 1. They *had bought* these *spices*, αρωματα,—myrrh, aloes, and unguents,—according to the Jewish custom in honourable funerals, on the evening of the crucifixion, as soon as they had seen where the body was laid; and they rested on the Sabbath. Had there been time before six in the evening, when the Sabbath commenced, to have embalmed the body, they would have done it; and that they were prevented by the intervention of the Sabbath affords the reason why they went to the sepulchre so early on the morning of the first day. Such consenting but incidental circumstances in the account give it an irresistible character of veracity.

Verse 2. *At the rising of the sun.*—Ανατειλαντος του ηλιου, *when the sun was about to rise*, just before daybreak, it being yet obscure. They were ignorant that the sepulchre had had a guard set over it, as not knowing what had passed between the Pharisees and Pilate, as to that security. They only knew that a great stone had been rolled to the mouth of the sepulchre, and they anxiously inquired of each other, *who should roll it away*. They might hope perhaps that some of the disciples would recover courage sufficient to come to the tomb of their Master, and that they might obtain their assistance. They found it, however, *rolled away*; which had been done by the angel of terribly glorious aspect, at whose presence the Roman guard had fainted with terror, and then hastened away. This same angel, it appears, was now in the interior of the sepulchre, and had laid aside all terror;

and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, [c] as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre: for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, [d] he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, [e] out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto [f] two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue; neither believed they them.

14 ¶ [g] Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat *at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 [h] And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; [i] but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; [k] In my name shall they cast out devils; [l] they shall speak with new tongues;

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[c] Matt. xxvi, 32.—[d] John xx, 14.—[e] Luke viii, 2. [f] Luke xxiv, 13.

[g] Luke xxiv, 36; John xx, 19.—* Or, *together.* [h] Matt. xxviii, 19.—[i] John xii, 48.—[k] Acts xvi, 18. [l] Acts ii, 4.

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and though retaining his supernatural character, addressed them in mild and encouraging accents.

Verse 7. *Tell his disciples and Peter.*—Και has here the force of especially: *tell his disciples, and* ESPECIALLY *Peter.* This was the angel's message; but he had received it from his Lord, who showed himself thus mindful of the repentant Peter, in the very moment of his glorious and triumphant resurrection.

Verse 8. *Neither said they any thing to any man.*—They would meet many, no doubt, on their return to the apostles; but such was their emotion, so strong and overpowering, that they spake to none by the way: a circumstance which intimates that they might meet some whom they knew, and those probably disciples.

Verse 9. *Now when Jesus was risen, &c.*—From this verse to the close, we have a rapid summary of the resurrection and appearances of our Lord to his disciples, the commission he gave them, his ascension into heaven, and the success of their preaching. It is so evidently appended as a hasty summary to what precedes, that its genuineness has been attacked by some critics, but most successfully defended.

Verse 10. *As they mourned and wept.*—This shows the deep sorrow and perplexity into which the death of Christ had thrown the disciples: the third day had arrived, and their sorrow was still unabated. In them were indeed fulfilled the words of Christ, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice;" and in a very short time were those words, of very different import, as signally fulfilled, "But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

Verse 12. *In another form.*—This refers to the two disciples going to Emmaus.—That εν ετερα μορφη does not mean, as some will have it, a different dress or habit, appears from the history. The *aspect* under which our Lord appeared to the two disciples was a disguised one; and he only presented himself in his true *form* in the breaking of bread, when they instantly knew him.

Verse 15. *Preach the Gospel to every creature.*—See notes on Matt. xxviii, 19. St. Matthew has, *all nations;* and St. Mark's *every creature* must be taken as exegetical of that phrase. It signifies, in fact, *all men,* whether Jews or Gentiles, and is used constantly in this sense in the Jewish writings; where the phrase "the creatures" signifies sometimes, it is true, the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews, but more generally men of all nations, all the rational creatures upon earth. This is the extent of our Lord's commission; and if the Gospel, the good news, is to be offered to all, it is that they may believe and be saved, from the power and possibility of which no one can be excluded by any decree of reprobation or preterition, or there would be no offer of good news to him; nor can he be *damned* according to the terms of this commission, but in consequence of rejecting the doctrine and offer of salvation, when proposed to him.—*Every creature* is a redeemed creature, or there could be no offer of mercy to *every creature.*

18 [m] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; [n] they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 ¶ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was [o] received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them*, and [p] confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

[m] Acts xxviii, 5.—[n] Acts xxviii, 8.—[o] Luke xxiv, 51.

[p] Heb. ii, 4.

Verse 18. *They shall take up serpents.*—As St. Paul in the island of Melita. *And if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them;* of which we have no instance in sacred history; but several are recorded in the ancient ecclesiastical histories, and the martyrologies. These, with the *casting out of devils*, speaking with *new tongues*, that is, tongues new to them, foreign languages, and *healing the sick*, are called *signs:* 1. Because in the sense of wonders, as things unknown and unheard of, either in themselves, or in their circumstances and accidents. 2. As attestations of a Divine commission, and therefore of the truth and heavenly authority of the doctrines taught, and the facts declared. How long these gifts continued in the Church has been a matter of controversy. This we know, that they were not only exercised by the apostles, but conveyed by them to others; and yet we soon reach a period when the pretensions to such gifts become equivocal and doubtful, and finally are to be resolved into pious frauds, or rather into impious imposture. It is not of much importance to ascertain at what precise point between these two periods the true gifts ceased. They were probably withdrawn gradually, and were exerted in some places longer than in others, or appeared in some parts when they had ceased in others. In their nature they were adapted to the introduction and establishment of a new form of religion, claiming to be an immediate revelation from God; but as soon as they entwined themselves into the records of authentic history as *facts*, they became good and sufficient evidence to carry down the demonstration of the truth of Christianity, along with its own glorious internal evidence, to all future ages. There was no necessity for their permanency; and that Christianity, pure and efficient Christianity, has, in these later times, made its way without any restoration of such gifts, at home or abroad, is an additional presumption that they were designed to be confined to the first ages, and that they have ceased, not for want of faith, as some have thought, but in pursuance of the Divine purpose and plan.—There is nothing in this view, however, contrary to the very rational opinion, that extraordinary circumstances may even now produce extraordinary aids to God's servants; and that sometimes they may be furnished with remarkable powers. We have no authority to prescribe one uniform mode of working to Him who is not only supreme as Sovereign, but infinite in wisdom. This, however, appears to constitute the difference between the former and the latter times of the Church; that in the former, what we call extraordinary gifts were so common as to be reckoned, in fact, among the *ordinary* means of spreading the influence of Christianity; whereas, in these later times, they are, in truth, extraordinary wherever they exist, and can only be regarded in the light of very rare and special visitations.

Verse 20. *The Lord working with them.*—Which refers to the secret influences of his grace, *giving the increase* to the seed they sowed, and to the shoots they planted. This CO-OPERATION of Christ with his servants, in their employment of *preaching everywhere* is therefore distinguished from his *confirming the word with signs following*, that is, proving the Divine original, and therefore truth, of their doctrine, by the miracles by which it was followed. They proposed the doctrine, and then the miracle became the sign and seal of its Divinity.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE.

THE author of this gospel was the companion of St. Paul in his evangelical labours, accompanied him to Rome after he had appealed unto Cesar, and there continued with him. He is generally supposed to be "*the beloved physician*" mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians. His name does not occur in the gospels; but it has been a matter of dispute whether he was not one of the seventy disciples. Some have thought him a Syrian early proselyted to the Jewish religion, with which he shows a perfect familiarity; others, that he was a Jew born at Antioch. The notion that St. Luke descended from Gentile parents is grounded upon his being spoken of in Col. iv, 14, distinctly from other friends and fellow labourers of St. Paul, who are characterized as *of the circumcision;* but the argument from this is far from being conclusive. He is supposed, after the termination of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, to have returned to Greece.

St. Luke's qualifications for his great work of writing his gospel were first and chiefly that inspiration which he, as well as the apostles, received; for the special gifts of the Holy Spirit were not, at their effusion on the day of pentecost, confined to the apostles; and by them they were afterward conferred upon others not then present. The strong probability is, that St. Luke, who professes an accurate acquaintance with the facts of his history, was among the disciples of our Lord during his life, and was present at the first great effusion of the Spirit. Of his inspiration, however, there can be no doubt. From their first publication, both the gospels of Mark and Luke, though the writers were not apostles, were received as of equal authority with those of Matthew and John; and they were thus distinguished from all others of those numerous accounts of the same events, which, we know, from the introduction of St. Luke's gospel, were in existence and circulation; some of which, at least, were, as far as they went, correct relations. It is true that Mark's gospel might derive authority from the general belief that it was written under the eye of St. Peter himself; but St. Luke's gospel could have no such recommendation; for though he was the companion of St. Paul, yet that apostle had not been an eye witness of the events of our Lord's life. Certainly the intercourse which St. Luke must have had with several apostles would give a powerful sanction to his history, which was published during their lifetime; but several of those who had written gospels which have long perished, and those early ones, against whose truth nothing was alleged, had intercourse also with apostles, and derived, no doubt, in many instances, their information from them, while yet their writings were never received in the primitive Church as having authority, nor, like the four gospels, were ever read in Christian assemblies, as portions of HOLY SCRIPTURE. This seems a sufficient answer to those who, like Michaelis, hesitate to place the gospels of Mark and Luke on a level with those of Matthew and John, under the notion that inspiration was confined to apostles only, which is a

gratuitous assumption. If the writings of Mark and Luke were not recognized as inspired writings by the apostles, in whose lifetime they were published, it is utterly impossible to account for that sanction under which they were received in the earliest times, to the exclusion of so many other writings of the same kind. Only as being accounted INSPIRED writings could they have obtained the authority they had in the primitive Church, and on that point that Church had the best, nay, infallible means of judging. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were in it; and those who possessed them could "try" all other "spirits, whether they were of God."

The testimonies of the earlier fathers to this gospel are as follows:—IRENÆUS asserts "that Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him." Again he says, "Luke was not only a companion, but a fellow labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul." He calls him "a disciple and fellow labourer of the apostles." "The apostles," says he, "envying none, plainly delivered to all, the things which they had heard from the Lord. So likewise Luke, envying no man, has delivered to us what he learned from them, as he says, 'Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of his word.'" EUSEBIUS informs us that CLEMENT of Alexandria bore a large testimony to this, as well as to the other gospels; and he mentions a tradition concerning the order of the gospels, which Clement had received from presbyters of more ancient times,—"that the gospels containing the genealogies were written first." TERTULLIAN speaks of Matthew and John as disciples of Christ; of Mark and Luke as disciples of the apostles; however, he ascribes the same authority to the gospels written by them as to the others. "The gospel," says he, "which Mark published, may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was: and Luke's digest is often ascribed to Paul. And indeed it is easy to take that for the master's which the disciples published." Again: "Moreover, Luke was not an apostle, but an apostolic man; not a master, but a disciple: certainly less than his master; certainly so much later, as he is a follower of Paul, the last of the apostles." ORIGEN mentions the gospels in the order commonly received. "The third," says he, "is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts." In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which we now have in a Latin version only, he writes, "Some say Lucius is Lucas, the evangelist, as indeed it is not uncommon to write names, sometimes according to the original form, sometimes according to the Greek and Roman termination." EUSEBIUS has left us the following testimony concerning Luke the evangelist: "And Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, who had, likewise, more than a slight acquaintance with the other apostles, has left us, in two books, divinely inspired, evidences of the art of healing souls, which he had learned from them. One of them is the gospel which he professeth to have written as they delivered it to him, who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of his word;" with all whom, he says, he had been perfectly acquainted from the first. And in another place, he adds, "Luke hath delivered in his gospel a certain account of such things as he had been assured of by his intimate acquaintance and familiarity with Paul, and his conversation with the other apostles." In the Synopsis ascribed to ATHANASIUS, it is said "that the gospel of Luke was dictated by the Apostle Paul, and written and published by the blessed apostle and physician Luke." GREGORY NAZIANZEN says "that Luke wrote for the Greeks;" and GREGORY NYSSEN, "that Luke was as much a physician for the soul as the

body." The testimony of JEROME concerning Luke is as follows: "Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, not unskilful in the Greek language, a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and the constant companion of his travels, wrote a gospel and another excellent volume, entitled, The Acts of the Apostles. It is supposed that Luke did not learn his gospel from the Apostle Paul only, who had not conversed with the Lord in the flesh, but also from other apostles; which likewise he owns at the beginning of his volume, saying, 'Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word.' Therefore he wrote the gospel from the information of others; but the Acts he composed from his own knowledge." The same writer, in the preface to his Commentary on St. Matthew, says, "The third evangelist is Luke, the physician, a Syrian of Antioch, who was a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and published his gospel in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia." In another place he observes "that some said that Luke had been a proselyte to Judaism, before his conversion to Christianity." CHRYSOSTOM, in his first Homily on the Gospel of Matthew, has this remark: "Luke had the fluency of Paul, Mark the conciseness of Peter, both learning of their masters."

The style of St. Luke is more classical than that of the other evangelists, but still strongly impressed, like theirs, with the Hebrew idiom. The majority of critics assign the date to A. D. 63, some earlier. Whether St. Luke wrote before or subsequently to St. Mark has been largely disputed; but nothing of consequence seems to depend upon the determination of the question, especially as it cannot be proved that any of the three first evangelists saw each other's gospels previously to the composition of their own. St. Luke clearly wrote for the benefit of the Gentile converts. This appears from internal evidence, as well as from the unanimous voice of antiquity. Though he has many things in common with the other gospels, his additions are numerous, and of the most weighty and interesting character. He has, however, less regard to chronological order than Matthew and Mark, and rather classifies the events, than narrates them in a series,—a method of composing history not uncommon with the writers of antiquity. He commences his work with an elegant preface, in which he briefly sets forth his motives for writing it, and inscribes it to Theophilus, who was probably a Greek convert of eminence.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The preface of Luke to his whole gospel.* 5 *The conception of John the Baptist,* 26 *and of Christ.* 39 *The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.* 57 *The nativity and circumcision of John.* 67 *The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ,* 76 *and of John.*

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word;

CHAPTER I. Verse 1. *Have taken in hand.*—The verb επεχειρησαν signifies to undertake successfully or otherwise. It does not here necessarily denote that the attempts alluded to failed; but yet other expressions in this introduction indicate that a better account was necessary, and that justice had not been done to the great subject. As St. Luke speaks of *many* having written such accounts, he could not refer to Matthew's gospel, which was one, nor to Mark's, which, if previously written, would make but two. It is natural to suppose that events so wonderful as those which had been witnessed by many, and narrated to still greater numbers in so many places by those who had witnessed them, events too which formed the evidences of the truth of the new religion, and which so deeply interested the very consciences and religious hopes of men, should be frequently committed to writing. This would be done often for private use; often for the information of distant friends; and those who might have collected most largely from the *viva voce* statements of those apostles and disciples "who went everywhere preaching the word," would no doubt be happy to read their collections in meetings of Christian friends. This would indeed continue after the earliest gospels had been published, because, before the art of printing, books were multiplied slowly, and were of course expensive. Such private collections, no doubt, are those to which St. Luke here refers; but we are not to confound them with the apocryphal gospels afterward published, chiefly by teachers and heads of fanatic sects, full of distorted facts and absurd relations, dreams and forgeries. The age of St. Luke was not the age of pious frauds and religious imposture of this kind, though these evils speedily came in. It was not before the second century that spurious gospels began to circulate, and in the third they greatly increased. Many have perished: a few have been collected by Fabricius; but none of these are so old as the age of St. Luke, and could not therefore be referred to by him. In fact, the manner in which he tacitly contrasts his own account with those to which he alludes shows in what they were defective. He admits that they contained the things believed among Christians, and recorded what had been delivered by *eye witnesses and ministers of the word;* but when St. Luke speaks emphatically of his *accurate* information in all things, from *the very first,* he intimates that there were parts of our Lord's history which these accounts did not state; when he proposes to write in *order,* he hints at the confused manner in which the events they had recorded had been thrown together; and, finally, when the end which he proposes was to make Theophilus know the *certainty* of the things in which he had been instructed that is, to see them in their strongest evidences, so as to have his faith confirmed by reading the narrative, although he does not certainly imply that any fabulous accounts had been introduced into these early writings, yet it does follow that the truth they contained was not placed in its most convincing and persuasive light, either for want of more copious information, or a faulty as well as a defective disposition.

To set forth in order.—The word does not appear to signify more than to *compose.*

A declaration.—Διηγησις is a *narrative* or *history.*

Most surely believed.—Πληροφορειν is to certify or assure a person, "*plenam fidem facere,*" Scapula; but when transferred to things, it signifies that which is fully believed, as in 2 Tim. iv, 17. Our translation, *most surely believed,* in this place, has been without reason objected to, and is certainly to be preferred to Hammond's "performed," and Campbell's "*accomplished,*" neither of which conveys any clear meaning.

Verse 2. *Even as they delivered.*—Παραδιδοναι properly signifies to deliver something over to another; hence, *to communicate verbally,* or instruct.

From the beginning.—Απ αρχης here

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 ¶ There was in the days of Herod,

must signify the commencement of Christ's ministry, when he began to collect disciples. From that time they were eye witnesses of his works and the events of his life; but of what preceded they were not witnesses.

Ministers of the word.—These eye witnesses, especially the twelve apostles and the seventy, had a ministry *of the word* assigned them during Christ's life, but of an imperfect character. In this title St. Luke, therefore, more directly refers to their subsequent ministry. They were first eye witnesses of the facts, and then ministers of the word or doctrine which, by their evidence, was demonstrated to be from God. Some take the term λογος here for the personal Word; but the Gospel is often so called, as, "The sower soweth the word;" "confirming the word with *signs following*." And St. Luke himself, in Acts vi, 4, speaks of "the ministry of the word," διακονιαν του λογου. Against those who argue that υπηρετης denotes a *personal* attendant, it is sufficient to quote 1 Cor. iv, 1: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers, υπηρετας, of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here it cannot mean a personal attendant; and this shows that it is a word of the same extent of meaning as *minister*, and is fitly rendered by it.

Verse 3. *It seemed good to me also.*—I also determined. He was moved by the Holy Spirit to this work, but as a reasonable being, as one observes, not a machine. He had felt the greatest interest in the subject, made the most diligent inquiries, laid up in his heart what he himself had observed; and God chose a man thus qualified for the task to perform it; and that he might do it infallibly, and in a manner more perfect than his natural or acquired qualities would enable him, he granted him his own inspiration.

Perfect understanding of all things from the very first.—Παρακολουθειν is *to trace* or *investigate* any matter so as to obtain a thorough knowledge of it. Here the word is strengthened by the addition of ακριβως, *accurately*.

From the very first.—Ανωθεν is taken, by Lightfoot, in its primary sense, *from above*, to denote inspiration. But this explicit and direct profession of inspiration is not in the manner of the sacred writers; and the sense of from *the top* or commencement is to be preferred, and refers not only to his knowledge of things from the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, but from his conception and birth.

In order.—Καθεξης has been understood to signify an exact successive series of events, so that St. Luke's narrative has been, by some harmonists of the gospels, taken as the rule by which to adjust the others. A careful consideration will, however, show that *the order* of which he speaks cannot be the order of succession of time. St. Luke indeed furnishes some important dates, but in a great number of instances the order of time has been disregarded; of which the evidence is furnished in his own gospel itself, as in several of his accounts of the miracles, discourses, and journeys of Christ. St. Luke's *order* must therefore be understood of his referring events to certain classes, adopted for the sake of illustration. Rosenmuller has marked these classes as follows: The first contains the narrative of the birth of Christ, with all its circumstances; the second, the particulars of our Saviour's infancy and youth; the third includes the preaching of John and the baptism of Christ; the fourth comprehends his discourses, miracles, and actions, during the three whole years of his ministry; the fifth contains our Saviour's last journey to Jerusalem, including the circumstances relative to his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. Campbell observes, "From the word καθεξης, we cannot conclude, as some have done, that the order of time is better observed by this than by any other evangelist. It does not necessarily relate to time. See Acts xviii, 23. The proper import of it is *distinctly*, *particularly*, as opposed to *confusedly*, *generally*."

Most excellent Theophilus.—The epithet κρατιστε indicates that Theophilus was a real not a feigned person; for this title was given exclusively to persons of eminence, as to Festus and Felix, the Roman governors, Acts xxiii, 26; xxvi, 25. It is equivalent to the Latin *optimus*. Such a title St. Luke was not likely to attach to an imaginary person. Besides, we have no instances in the other parts of Scripture history of the use of feigned names.

Verse 4. *Know the certainty.*—By a particular and full statement of things whereby their evidence would be set forth in a more convincing manner.

Wherein thou hast been instructed.—Every Christian in those early ages who had heard the preaching of the apostles and others, and had placed himself under due course of instruction, would be taught the leading facts of Christ's history, and the leading doctrines of his discourses. On this sure basis faith might be built, and it would be confirmed by the various miracles wrought

the king of Judea, a certain priest, named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 [a] And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

[a] Exod. xxx, 7; Lev. xvi, 17.

by the apostles and those to whom supernatural gifts had been communicated. Still, all the knowledge acquired in this manner would be general; and it is easy for us, who have so often felt the edification arising from reading the gospels, to conceive of the immense benefit which was conferred upon a sincere but young and partially informed believer, by putting into his hands even one of those Divine and all-important narratives of the history and discourses of our Lord. Through Theophilus the gift was, however, designed for the whole Church.

Verse 5. *A certain priest named Zacharias.*—Several reasons appear for the insertion of the account of the birth of John the Baptist, at least in one of the gospels. 1. That John might be pointed out as a special messenger of God, by the supernatural circumstances accompanying his birth; for whatever accredited John gave weight to his testimony respecting the Messiahship of Jesus. 2. That we might be made acquainted with some interesting particulars respecting the mother of our Lord after her conception. 3. That several prophetic songs, uttered under special inspiration, and which showed that the long suspended gift of prophecy had been restored, might be recorded.

Of the course of Abia.—The Jewish priests were divided into twenty-four courses, each of which attended, in rotation, to perform the service of the temple. At the three great feasts they all attended. That Zacharias was a priest of one of these courses, proves that he was not the high priest, as some have thought; for the high priest was of no course. As each course, so each priest in the course, was in attendance for one week, twice in each year, the great festivals excepted.

Of the daughters of Aaron.—Yet she was cousin to Mary, who was of the tribe of Judah, which indicates the marriage of some predecessor into the other tribe. The priests might marry into any of the tribes of Israel; and the law restraining heiresses to marry into their own tribes did not extend to other daughters, nor at all to the tribe of Levi, who had no share in the land.

Righteous before God.—Not as the Pharisees, before men, but *in the sight of God;* and therefore sincerely so, because God trieth the reins and the heart.

Commandments and ordinances.—These comprehend both moral and ceremonial injunctions; but that εντολαι signifies the former, δικαιωματα, the other, is assumed without sufficient proof. They are words of nearly similar import, and each includes whatever God has expressly commanded, whether positive or moral; which, as resting upon the same authority, is felt to be binding upon his conscience by every good man. The righteousness of this venerable pair is the same, substantially, as the righteousness of true Christians. We have our moral rules and our ritual observances, although the latter are of a simpler character, as suited to a more perfect and spiritual dispensation; and in *walking in them*, a phrase which expresses the *habit of obedience*, our practical righteousness consists.

Blameless.—Neither as to the moral law, nor the ritual obligations of Judaism, were they open to the slightest human blame or censure.

Verse 7. *Well stricken in years.*—The ages are not given; so that whether the event of Elisabeth's conception was strictly miraculous or merely preternatural, cannot be determined. It supposed, in either case, a special interposition of God; so that John was born out of the usual course of things.

Verse 8. *Before God.*—That is, in the temple, and in his turn, according to the course of Abia.

Verse 9. *His lot was to burn incense, &c.*—The priests in each class distributed the service each was to perform by *lot;* and in this way it was determined who should cleanse the altar, who slay the sacrifice, who should sprinkle the blood, who should remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who should cleanse the lamps, who should burn the incense, &c. The last was esteemed a highly honourable service.

Verse 10. *The whole multitude of the people.*—From this it has been probably concluded that the time was a Sabbath or a festival; for on ordinary days the attendance was

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight

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not numerous. Hence, there were always twenty-four men engaged to attend, who represented the whole people of Israel, laid their hands upon the head of the sacrifices, prayed, and received the benediction. On this curious representative institution Maimonides remarks, "It is not possible that a man's offering should be offered up, and he not stand by it. But the offerings of the congregation are the offerings of all Israel; and it is not possible that all Israel should stand in the court at the time of sacrifice.—Wherefore the former prophets ordered that they should choose out of Israel men that were fit, and feared to sin, that they might be the messengers of all Israel, to stand by the offerings; and these are called the men of *the station*; and they divided them into twenty-four stations, according to the number of the courses of the priests and Levites." Thus on all occasions the whole body of the Israelites everywhere was represented by these stationary men, and through them, as their representatives, all were supposed to be present.

At the time of incense.—The golden altar, or altar of incense, was within the *ναος*, or sanctuary, or temple itself. Here when the priest burned the "sweet incense," in the morning and in the evening, the people without, in the court of the Israelites, prayed, each by himself, for the pardon of his sins, till the priest returned and pronounced the benediction. This is vigorously described in the book of Ecclesiasticus l, 19–21: "And the people besought the Lord, the Most High, by prayer before him that is merciful, till the solemnity of the Lord was ended, and they had finished his service. Then he (the priest) went down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the Lord with his lips, and to rejoice in his name. And they bowed themselves down to worship the second time, that they might receive a blessing from the Most High." The whole was typical of the intercession of our great High Priest, the presentation of our prayers through Him whose merit alone can render them a "sweet-smelling savour to God," and of that effectual BLESSING in the daily forgiveness of sin which he bestows upon all those who "draw near to God through him."

Verse 11. *On the right side of the altar of incense.*—The right was esteemed a good omen, says Grotius. This is true as to the heathen; but a pious Jew would not be under the influence of that kind of superstition, nor would an angel from God plant himself on the right side of the altar to sanction so silly a notion.

Verse 12. *He was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*—Such has been the uniform effect of supernatural appearances, even when gracious to good men. They assign a feeble and indeed an absurd reason, who speak of an INSTINCTIVE dread of supernatural beings in human nature. The whole is to be resolved into our strong sense of sinfulness and guilt. These appearances bring the agency of God very nigh to us; and the appropriate language which a sense of his holiness and our own impurity or defects suggests is that of Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The most righteous man feels that he cannot stand before God on the ground of his merits.

Verse 13. *Thy prayer is heard.*—Hi-prayer for children, which had been long offered, though not till now answered. It does not follow from this that he continued to pray for children. This is not likely, since the age both of himself and his wife forbade the hope being still cherished.—Those who make this *prayer* to be the public prayer which the priest offered, during incense, for the people of Israel, and, according to Philo, also for the human race, break the connection between those words and what follows.

And thou shalt call his name John.—In Hebrew, John is, יוחנן, the *grace* or *mercy* of God; and, as the consequence of this is joy and rejoicing, so the name is used also to express those emotions. To this import of the name, John, the next verse clearly refers: *And thou shalt have* JOY *and* GLADNESS; *and many shall* REJOICE *at his birth.*

Verse 15. *Great in the sight of the Lord.*—Not merely a famous or celebrated man, the idea with which some cold interpreters content themselves, but great *in the sight of the Lord*,—a Hebraism to express real greatness and excellence. He was specially endowed with gifts, and commended himself to God by a faithful use of them in the discharge of his duty. John's was a great character; his office was great, the greatest ever assigned to mere mortal, for he was the herald of the world's Divine Redeemer; and the effects and results of his ministry were great, in preparing the way of the Lord.

Neither wine nor strong drink.—That is,

of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 [b] And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the

[b] Malachi, chap. iv, 6.

neither wine nor any inebriating liquor whatever. This was the law of the Nazarites, who voluntarily abstained from the indulgence of these liquors, though used with temperance, regarding them as a luxury, and unbecoming that life of religious mortification and self-denial to which they devoted themselves.

Filled with the Holy Ghost.—Placed under his special influence, and training for his great office, *from his mother's womb;* that is, from the earliest period of life.

Verse 16. *Shall he turn to the Lord their God.*—As the Jews in his day were not given to the worship of strange gods, this cannot signify their conversion from idolatry. Amid forms of piety, and acts of worship, offered to the true God himself, men may be far from him in spirit, temper, and affection; and this was the case with the Jews, and still is the case with every man who is not, by true repentance of sin, and deep conviction of the vanity of earthly things, so turned to God as to seek him as his chief good, and to delight in him as his portion, and the centre and rest of his soul. John's ministry was signally marked by this powerful effect. He turned the heart to God, and then showed the true and only way to God, through the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Verse 17. *Spirit and power of Elias.*—The SPIRIT of Elias seems to mean, generally, with similar zeal and courage; and the POWER, the mighty energy of his teaching, as inflamed and intoned by those mighty affections of jealousy for God's honour, and concern for the salvation of the people, and indignant hostility to all hypocrisy, formality, and treachery, which lived and glowed in his bosom. Both the spirit and the power were, however, derived from the Holy Spirit, with which both these prophets were so richly endowed, and from that Fountain they were constantly supplied.

To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.—The Prophet Malachi, from whom the words are taken, adds, "And the heart of the children to their fathers." This must either signify that he should compose the differences in families, and diffuse kind and benevolent affections through society, or else, as the Hebrew particle עַל may be taken in the sense of *with*, that he should turn the hearts of the fathers *with* the children, and the children *with* the fathers, that is, persons of all ages, the aged and the young, by one mighty and influential reformation, to God. The latter interpretation seems entitled to the preference; as the general success of his ministry is the subject of the prophecy, and not any of those particular effects which would follow, as matter of course, from that as from every other revival of the spirit of true religion.

The disobedient to the wisdom of the just.—Campbell unites this with the following clause, and renders it, "And by the wisdom of the righteous to render the disobedient a people well disposed for the Lord;" which conveys but an obscure and somewhat equivocal meaning. Nor is there any critical reason why the clauses should not be taken separately. Εν φρονησει is put for εις φρονησιν, εν having often this sense in the New Testament. Φρονησις signifies wisdom or prudence, or mental perception and feeling.—There is not much difference whether we translate the word the *wisdom*, the *knowledge and virtue* of the just, or the *views and feelings* of the just.

A people prepared for the Lord.—The word κατεσκευασμενος is used, by Greek writers, to express an army supplied with all necessaries, so as to be fit for service; and to describe a ship furnished with proper stores, and therefore ready to sail. It was by turning the hearts of men to God, by producing conviction of sin and danger, and penitential sorrow on account of sin, and by introducing the views and feelings of *just men* as to religious and eternal things, their knowledge and convictions on these subjects, their serious feelings and hallowed desires, that men were thus fitted and furnished to receive the doctrine of the advent of the Messiah, as the true sacrifice for sin, and the hope of man. This is the necessary preparation now for the actual and saving reception of Christ; but to be made holy and righteous in order to qualify us to receive him would be to seek restoration to health to prepare us for the advice and medicine of the physician. The preaching of John, and the effects which followed explain the whole.—He warned the people of a wrath to come, hanging over them as sinners; he produced alarm, contrition, humiliation, spiritual desires, the φρονησις, the views and tastes of just persons, and thus turned the heart in penitence, prayer, and desire to God. But John could go no farther; nor can the doctrine or the preachers of repentance go farther: in order that the sins so repented of, and confessed, and loathed, may be forgiven and removed, they, like John, must point to

hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient * to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

* Or, *by.*

the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." A state of repentance, represented by the dispensation of John the Baptist, *prepares men for the Lord.* This is its only office; it reconciles not man to God, but puts him into a state, not of moral, but of relative fitness, as an humbled, contrite man, to be reconciled to him through the atonement. It takes not away our sins, but makes us sensible of them; and therefore it is not a state to be rested in. It is not a state of safety; it places us not in the refuge, but only in the way to it.

Verse 18. *Whereby shall I know this?*—Though an angel spoke to him, he was slow to believe, and therefore asks a sign, some token that he was not deceived by an illusion. This sign was given by the infliction of a temporary dumbness, which was a mild reproof to Zacharias for not believing the words of the angel at once, and without a sign; and was at the same time calculated to produce a strong impression upon the people, and to prepare them to expect something very extraordinary from the child who was to be born. Zacharias became not only dumb, but deaf also, as appears from his friends being obliged to make signs to him, verse 62.

Verse 19. *Gabriel.*—גבריאל signifies *the power of God.* It has been often said that the Jews learned the names of angels in Chaldea. They probably received many of their corrupt and superstitious notions respecting angels from the oriental philosophy, and the names of imaginary orders and classes of angelic beings, as well as the names of individuals. But this name was not so learned. It was a name of revelation, the angel's own name told by himself; and the reason why he gave his name was, to show that he was the same angel who had appeared to Daniel, and thus to call the attention of Zacharias, and of other pious people through him,—those who were "waiting for the redemption,"—to those prophecies respecting Messiah which this same angel had communicated to Daniel, and which were about to be accomplished. When he speaks of himself, as *standing in the presence of God*, he declares his dignity for the purpose of producing a stronger impression of the importance of his message. His name, the *power of God*, indicated the exalted qualities with which his Divine Creator had endowed him; his standing in the immediate *presence*, his nearer and more intimate access to the manifested glories of the Majesty of heaven, showed him to be among the most exalted of the order of angels. To this dignified messenger were the prophecies of Christ revealed to Daniel committed: he announced the conception and birth of Messiah's herald, and of THE CHRIST himself. This indeed was employment for an angel of the highest order, and such as he would feel himself most honoured by. Redemption is the most glorious theme of the loftiest intellects in the universe; of the mental power of the sons of light themselves;—"which things the angels desire to look into." Yet how many are there among men, who, from pride of intellect alone, disdain this theme! To these Greeks the doctrine of the cross is foolishness,—precisely that doctrine which engages so deeply the thoughts and interests of angels! And thus they render those words applicable to themselves, as much so as to the philosophers of paganism, of whom St. Paul is speaking, though on another subject: "Professing themselves wise, they became fools."

Verses 21, 22. *And the people waited.*—They waited for the return of the officiating priest out of the sanctuary, that he might dismiss them with the accustomed benediction, Numbers vi, 23–26. When therefore he came out and *could not speak to them*, could not perform this part of his duty because of his having been struck dumb by the angel, they concluded from this, and from his having continued so much longer than usual in the sanctuary, detained either by the angel or his own musings upon the scene, that he *had seen a vision*, some supernatural appearance. This Zacharias appears to have confirmed;

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* * highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear

* Or, *graciously accepted*, or, *much graced*. See verse 30.

for it is added, *he beckoned to them*, he made signs by nodding the head, διανευω; he assented to what appeared to be their impression.

Verse 23. *The days of his ministration.*—Λειτουργια is from λητος, *public*, and εργον, a *work*, and signifies therefore a public service, civil, military, or religious. In the New Testament it is confined to the latter; and is used of the ministration of the priests of the law; and of that of Christian preachers, the ministers of God's spiritual house or temple, the Church.

Verse 24. *Hid herself.*—To give herself up to prayer and thanksgiving, and avoiding general society lest she should be interrupted; and also, probably, as her son was to be a Nazarite from the womb, that, like the mother of Samson, she might avoid "drinking wine, or eating any unclean thing," Judges xiii, 4.

Verse 25. *My reproach, &c.*—As a numerous offspring was one of the temporal promises of the old covenant, so children were regarded as a proof of the Divine favour, and the want of them of his displeasure. This was one reason of the reproach of barrenness. Another was the hope that the Jewish women had of giving birth to the Messiah; but this was necessarily confined to those of the tribe of Judah, and the house of David. Elisabeth's joy did not, therefore, arise from that hope; but first, that she was to become a mother; and, second, that her son was to be so eminent a prophet of the Most High.

Verse 26. *In the sixth month.*—From the time of Elisabeth's conception. Galilee the province, and Nazareth the town, are both here mentioned, because Galilee, from the long intermixture of Gentiles in its population, was in low repute: "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet;" and Nazareth was thought so despicable a place that even Nathanael asks, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" although he himself was a Galilean. Thus Galilee was despised by the Jews of the other provinces; and Nazareth, a town of Galilee, by the Galileans themselves. This probably arose from the vicious character of its inhabitants which was fully confirmed by their stubborn and almost universal rejection and contempt of Christ. In this unrighteous and despised town, a branch of the royal family of David was found, but in humble circumstances; and from all this lowliness it pleased God that the Messiah should spring, to shame and to humble the pride of man, and to teach how far we were fallen, when the Son of God must stoop to the lowest humiliation to raise us up.

Verse 27. *To a virgin espoused, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. i, 18–25. St. Matthew records the subsequent appearance of the angel to Joseph; St. Luke, the previous annunciation to Mary.

Verse 28. *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, &c.*—The supplied words in our translation had been better left out, and the sentence have stood, *Hail, highly favoured;* which, after all the renderings proposed, best expresses χαιρε κεχαριτωμενη. The *Lord is with thee*, or rather, in the usual form of pious salutation, *The Lord be with thee*, which was adopted by the early Christians. *Blessed art thou among women;* "thou shalt be reckoned in the highest degree happy and favoured," as the mother of the incarnate Messiah himself. It is remarkable that much as the papists have perverted these words to favour their idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary, they are not so strong as those used of some other distinguished women. *Blessed art thou* AMONG *women* are the words of the angel to Mary; but in Judges v, 24, we read, "Blessed ABOVE women shall Jael be;" and in Judith xiii, 18, it is said, "Blessed art thou ABOVE all the women upon the earth." "If there was any reason," says Bishop Pearce, "why the angel chose to say AMONG women, rather than ABOVE women, may it not have been that our opinion of the Virgin Mary might not be raised too high?"

Verse 29. *What manner of salutation.*—What these salutations implied, and in what

not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 [c] And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be

[c] Isaiah vii, 14; Matt. i, 21.

that felicity consisted which the angel declared she had attained. *Fear*, however, was her predominant feeling, produced by the presence of the celestial visitant.

Verse 31. *Call his name Jesus.*—See note on Matt. i, 21.

Verse 32. *He shall be great, &c.*—Great in power and authority, in glory and fame, in office and administration; yet not in a civil or worldly sense, as the event proved. All this is accomplished, however, more gloriously in his spiritual and mediatorial dominion. Or, more particularly, our Lord was in a special and peculiar sense great, in his PERSON, as God and man united; and hence Isaiah, after he has said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," adds, "and his name shall be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father:" great in his PROPHETIC OFFICE, in his doctrine and miracles, "mighty in word and deed:" in his PRIESTHOOD, as offering the universal sacrifice for the sin of the whole world not to be repeated, and establishing upon its merit a constant, ever prevalent, and universal intercession: and great as the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, to whom "all power is given in heaven and earth," and "of whose kingdom there is no end."

Shall be called the Son of the Highest.—He shall be distinguished from all others by this designation. And so it has been. Jesus was condemned for professing to be the Son of God; this was the blasphemy imputed to him by the Jewish council, and for which they judged him "worthy of death:" but he was demonstrated to be "the Son of God with power," by his resurrection, which established the claim to this title he had asserted before the sanhedrim; and by this he has been known, venerated, and worshipped in his Church, THE SON OF GOD, in a sense in which no creature can be,—the Son of God in his higher and Divine nature, "God of God, Light of light, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." This is the sense in which he has been *called* the Son of God, in his Church, in all ages; and it is supported by his own infallible testimony at his trial, and by the constant testimony of his inspired apostles.

To be called often means simply to be; but not here, or it would have been found in the preceding clause, which is, *and he shall be great*, not, "he shall be called great." It appears to relate to his public and glorious designation in all ages of the Church, in time and through eternity,—"The Son of the living God." The Highest, Υψιστος, is sometimes joined with Θεος, but often stands alone as a title of God. It is used by the LXX. for the Hebrew עליון, the High One, or Most High.

The throne of his Father David.—David was a typical character; and the dominion he acquired, which was to the full extent of the original grant of Canaan made to Abraham, and is expressed by the terms, "from sea to sea, and from the river," Euphrates, "to the ends of the earth," was a type of the universal dominion of Messiah, when "all kings shall serve him, and all nations shall call him blessed." The application of the characters of David's kingdom, in an enlarged meaning, to that of the Messiah, by the prophets, shows that the one was regarded as the emblem or type of the other. But there was another reason why the Messiah was represented as the successor to David's throne. It was a part of the covenant made with David, that he should not want a man to sit upon his throne: "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me; it shall be established for ever, and as a faithful witness in heaven." But a higher throne than the national throne of Israel was intended; even the throne of all nations, to which our Lord has succeeded. For the kingdom of Christ is twofold. It is that spiritual dominion exercised over the wills and affections of men, by moral influence, by which they subject themselves to his laws and authority; and it is that exercise of external government over the world, vested in our Lord, as Mediator, by which, both by mercies and judgments, by the ordering of its changes, the succession of its empires, the distribution of human power, the punishment of persecutors, the destruction of enemies, the determination of the times, places, and influence of knowledge and inventions, of arts, commerce, and the intercourse of the different parts of the world, his great designs as to the moral recovery of all nations, and the universal establishment of the empire of his truth, in all its righteous and peaceful influences shall be effected. In this respect he is the King of the Jews, as well as other nations; for though that people are dispersed and denationalized, it is by an act of his severity, and can continue no longer than he wills; and to this power, as the Divine Sovereign of Israel, is added "all power in heaven and earth." That a descendant of David should enter upon this universal sovereignty, and wield its sceptre for ever, was indeed the most signal honour which could be conferred upon his "house," and most amply ful-

called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 [d] And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest

[d] Dan. vii, 14; Micah iv, 7.

filled the terms of the promise. As to POWER, the dominion of Christ is now universal; and as to GRACE, the type shall be realized ultimately; and in the visible administration of his Gospel, purifying and softening all the institutions of society, Christ shall reign, the universal Lord, "from the river to the ends of the earth." Then shall be accomplished the words of Zechariah, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one:" then the theocracy shall be universally acknowledged; all earthly rulers confessing themselves to be but vice-kings and servants of Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Verse 35. *The Holy Ghost shall, &c.*—That *the power of the Highest*, in the second clause, means the same as *the Holy Ghost* in the first, has often been taken for granted; but on insufficient grounds. It is true, we ought not too curiously to inquire into these great mysteries; but into the clearest and most satisfactory meaning of the terms in which they are expressed we are bound, though with modesty, to examine.—Now, if the meaning of these two clauses be the same, the latter must be considered as illustrative of the former, or as a mere repetition of the same idea in different terms.—That the latter clause cannot be considered as explanatory of the former, is sufficiently proved from its being a more general and obscure mode of speaking; so that, in fact, it does not explain it. That it is a repetition of the same thing in another form under the influence of that mode of speaking in parallelisms which was impressed upon the style of the Hebrews from their sacred poetry, can scarcely be admitted; because these parallels are used to heighten the idea, or place it in some new light, and not unfrequently join another thought to the original one; none of which takes place here. But as, in fact, there were two acts to be performed in this "preparation of the body" of our Lord,—one the miraculous production of a human being, and the other the joining of the Divine nature with it in personal union, so that the Christ might be "Immanuel, God with us,"—it is reasonable to conclude that, in this so particular an explanation of the case to Mary, both should be referred to. Still farther, the production of the human nature of our Lord, in the womb of the virgin, is uniformly ascribed to the exclusive agency of the Holy Spirit, as much so as the agency of one of the Divine persons can be exclusive of the other; but the second act, the impersonating of the Divine WORD with the nature so produced, could only be the personal act of that WORD himself, in concurrence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This act would therefore be naturally expressed in the general terms, *the power of the Highest*, that is, the power of the most high God, *shall overshadow*, shall exert its influence upon or in, *thee*. This view will lead us through some difficulties with which the text will be found environed if we take the miraculous conception of the human nature of our Lord, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to be the only particular mentioned in it. It would then follow that this miraculous conception is the *reason* given by the angel why Christ should be, and be called the Son of God; but in opposition to this stand the facts that his title Son of God is, throughout the remainder of the New Testament, put upon higher and distinct ground, especially as necessarily implying Divinity, or being of one nature with the Father; and also that he is never throughout the New Testament, either by himself or others, called the Son of God with reference to his conception. Nathanael so entitles him, because he had had a proof of his PRESCIENCE, and when he certainly knew nothing of the miraculous conception. He himself called God his PROPER FATHER, and himself the SON OF GOD, in a sense which implied EQUALITY with God, and allowed the Jews so to understand him; whereas no such equality was implied in the mere miraculous conception; so that he could have no reference to that as the ground of these lofty assumptions of Divinity itself. The same may be said of his suffering himself to be condemned for blasphemy, without defence; by which he allowed that his claiming to be the Son of God was with reference to his Divine, not his human nature, or he would have been accessory to his own murder. St. Paul also uses the title, Son of God, as OPPOSED to what Christ was "according to the flesh," the descendant and Son of David: while the term "only begotten" entirely shuts out the notion that he became the Son of God by his miraculous conception, which was but a mode of creation in the womb of the virgin; since in the sense of CREATION he is not the "only begotten," but shares that with all the angels,

shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

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and with the first human being. No passages, indeed, in the New Testament can be adduced in which Christ is called the Son of God with reference to the production of his human nature; and in this view, therefore, the angel's words would be wholly unintelligible, because they indicate, if so interpreted, that this circumstance should be the open and public reason, if not indeed the exclusive one, why he should be invested with that title; and yet, when we look at the fact, it is never referred to as the ground and reason of it at all. If, however, we consider that TWO ACTS are mentioned in the text, distinct acts, referable to TWO AGENTS, we have an easy and satisfactory interpretation which avoids this serious difficulty, and harmonizes the words of the angel both with the reason of the case and with the facts and the doctrine of the New Testament. First, we have the act of the Holy Ghost, producing that HOLY THING which was to be born of the virgin; and we have the distinct act of *the power of the Highest*, (the title given to our Lord himself, see note on verse 76,) uniting himself the eternal Word to that which was so formed in the womb of the virgin. By this act it was that the "Word was made flesh," which he could no otherwise be than by taking flesh into personal union with himself, a matter entirely distinct from the production of the body of Christ in any mode, and not in any sense necessarily involved in it. From these two acts all that the angel mentions followed. It followed that that should be a HOLY THING which should be born of Mary, as being produced immediately by the Holy Ghost; and it followed that this *holy thing* should be called THE SON OF GOD. That *power of the Highest* which overshadowed, exerted his influence upon the virgin, took the holy thing into personal union with himself, who was in his Divine nature the Son of God; and this became the appellation of the one undivided Christ, but wholly by virtue of the hypostatical union. The mode of expression by which the concluding clause is introduced leads also to the same conclusion. The particle διο, "therefore," is consequential, and is not to be understood as though the angel were giving a reason why Christ should become the Son of God, but why he should be owned and acknowledged as such. We have also the addition of και in the sense of "also:" *Therefore* ALSO *that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*; it shall not merely be called *holy*, which would follow from its being the immediate production of the Holy Ghost, but more than that, it shall be called the Son of God, because of another and an additional circumstance, the union of the two natures. For since human nature was united to the Son of God, it was to bear the same name as being in indissoluble union with him.

Could it indeed be inferred from this passage, that our Lord was called the Son of God because of the miraculous conception, it would make no difference in the argument by which he is proved to be the Son of God as to his Divine nature, because that rests upon quite distinct and independent passages of Scripture. It would only follow that, not on one only, but on two accounts, that distinguishing appellation was given to him; but this very text, which is the only one in the New Testament that favours this opinion, lies strongly against it, and cannot be so interpreted without establishing a variance between the words of the angel and the other parts of the New Testament. As for those who endeavour to evade the force of the argument drawn from the title Son of God, in favour of our Lord's Divinity, by representing it to be a title of Messias, it is difficult to see what they gain by that evasion. The Messias is called "the Son of God;" no one doubts that; but still the inquiry remains, Why is he so called? The true answer to this must be, that he really was what he is called, and was not OFFICIALLY called what NATURALLY he was not; otherwise we have words without any meaning at all, or words adapted to convey an erroneous one.

The unborn human nature of Christ is called a *holy thing*. Some have without reason suspected a mystery in the phrase; but the Greeks, when speaking of unborn children, used the neuter gender. On the miraculous conception it may be generally remarked that it was essential to our Lord's sacrifice, that he should in no degree partake of the natural pollution of the fallen race, nor be included in the general condemnation of Adam's descendants, by being "born of the flesh." By this wonderful mystery of his incarnation, he was "made of a woman," not of man; he came not by natural generation; he was allied to the race, yet not *of* the race in the way of descent; "judgment" did not, therefore, pass upon him to "condemnation," and he needed no "justification of life." He had no seeds of evil in his nature, and was under no hereditary curse; all he suffered was voluntary, and therefore vicarious; and as there was in him no inbred or contracted guilt, he alone of all who ever

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed *is* she * that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 ° He hath showed strength with his

* Or, *which believed that there.*

° Isaiah li, 9.

lived could "offer himself without spot to God." See the note on Matt. i, 23.

Verse 38. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.*—This was a customary expression of entire submission and obedience.

Verse 39. *A city of Juda.*—This was Hebron, which was a city of priests, about twenty-two miles from Jerusalem. Judah was divided into "the hill country, the champaign country, and the valley." Hebron was situated in the first division. The distance from Nazareth to Hebron was near one hundred miles; so that the journey was long, and no doubt taken under Divine suggestion: this is probably the reason why Mary is said to have gone *with haste;* and as the angel had announced that her cousin had "conceived a son in her old age," she would be naturally desirous, by ascertaining the fact from a personal interview, to confirm the words of the angel as to herself.

Verse 41. *And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.*—It was a sufficient proof that she was so, that she hailed Mary as soon as they met, as the mother of the Messias,—a fact she could only know by Divine inspiration, since the annunciation of the angel to Mary was a secret with herself, and she had not had time to tell it to Elisabeth. Even the believing temper of mind in which Mary had received the words of the angel was made known to Elisabeth under this illapse of supernatural influence. *And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance, &c.;* or, as in the margin, "that there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." In these words it has not been improbably conjectured that there is a delicate allusion to the doubtfulness manifested by her husband Zacharias, and the infliction of dumbness, under which he was still labouring as his punishment.

Verse 46. *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, &c.*—As a pious woman waiting for the Messiah, her joy would be great, from knowing that he was already conceived, and would soon be born; and this was greatly heightened by the consideration that she was the chosen virgin mentioned by the prophet, who was to give him birth.—The pious strains in which she pours forth her grateful feelings resemble those of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, but they are appropriate to the occasion.

Verse 48. *The low estate.*—The lowly condition; for though of the regal family of David, yet she was in the humblest rank of society.

Shall call me blessed.—Shall acknowledge that I am a happy woman. The word does not signify honour, much less religious honour, but simply happiness. So in St. James: "Behold, we count them happy," or call them blessed, "that endure."

Verse 49. *Great things.*—He hath bestowed upon me wonderful benefits. *And holy is his name.* This may be taken imperatively, "Let his name be hallowed and most deeply reverenced."

Verse 50. *His mercy, &c.*—Here she intimates that the gift was not private or confined to few, but that *the mercy* of God, in sending the Messiah, was a public one, the benefit of which was to descend *from generation to generation.*

Verse 51. *He hath scattered the proud.*—There is here a probable reference to the

arm; [f] he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 [g] He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 [h] He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in [i] remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 [k] As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

[f] Psalm xxxiii, 10.—[g] 1 Sam. ii, 6.—[h] Psalm xxxiv, 10.

[i] Jer. xxxi, 3, 20.—[k] Psalm cxxxii, 11; Gen. xvii, 19

different course taken by the Divine counsel from that which proud, self-confident persons so often prescribe to the Almighty.—They had their anticipations as to the circumstances of the birth, or the appearance of Messiah. They probably thought that he would spring from one of the most opulent and influential remaining families of the house of David; least of all did they anticipate that he should arise in Galilee. Thus, in the event, *he scattered the proud in*, that is, *as to what concerns the thoughts or imaginations of their hearts;* he dissipated and contradicted all their views and expectations.—On which Norris, in his Treatise on Humility, excellently well observes, "He perplexes the schemes of the proud, distracts their politics, breaks their measures, sets those things far asunder which they had united in one system, and so disperses the broken pieces of it, that they can never put them together again. And by this he turns their wisdom into folly, their imaginary greatness into contempt, and their glory into shame; so overruling their counsels in his wise goverment of the world as to make all turn to his, not to their praise." As God in the exercise of his sovereignty confounds the wisdom of the wise, so *he puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of low degree;* fills *the hungry*, and sends *the rich empty* away. Similar sentiments occur in the song of Hannah, and frequently in the sacred songs of the Hebrews. They show how attentive they were to the Divine dispensations, and how familiar they were with the principles on which they proceed. One of these is, "to hide pride from man," and to bring him to feel and confess his entire dependence upon God. In the way of humility God meets with every man; in the way of pride and self-sufficiency he resists and spurns him. Thus our Saviour was born among lowly people; he came to them and not to the proud, and to this trial worldly minded men were afterward more fully subjected. He appeared among the humble in his own humility, and the proud rejected him. The consequence of this, however, was, *the putting down the mighty from their seats*, while to them that received him he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Verse 54. *He hath holpen his servant Israel.*—The Messiah was promised before Israel existed as a people; the promise was universal, and made as to its benefits to all nations. But he was to appear among the Israelites; an Israelite himself, and to them the first offers of his grace were to be made. Thus, by the Messiah, God *sent help* to his servant Israel. The word means to take hold of, in order to raise up. This was his gracious intention as to the Jews, and to all others. Our redemption is thus effected, by the reaching down of the arm of the Divine mercy to raise us up from sin, misery, and ruin, and to exalt us to a state of knowledge, holiness, and joy.

In remembrance of his mercy.—That is, of his promised mercy; which, though long delayed,—for the promise was early given,—was always remembered, and was at length accomplished in "the fulness," the ripeness and maturity, "of time."

Verse 55. *As he spake to our fathers, &c.*—This is better connected with the preceding verse, thus, *In remembrance of his mercy to Abraham and his seed for ever, as he spake to our fathers.*

Verse 56. *And returned to her own house*—She would be then three months advanced in pregnancy; and then, or soon after, it was that, the fact being suspected by Joseph, to whom she had been betrothed, he purposed to put her away privily. See the note on Matt. i, 19.

Verse 59. *And they called him Zacharias.*—That is, they proposed and urged it, out of respect to Zacharias, who was dumb, and therefore apparently an object of commiseration; for it was not usual for the Jews to call the son by the father's name, though they had respect to the names of kindred. Elisabeth had, however, learned from her husband by writing that the child was to be

60 And his mother answered and said, Not *so;* but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these * sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 [l] And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 [m] As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our

* Or, *things*.

[l] Psalm cxxxii, 17.—[m] Jer. xxiii, 6; xxx, 10.

called John, which he confirmed. At this it is said *they marvelled*, either because it was an unusual thing to introduce a new name into a family, or more probably because they concluded that it was by Divine appointment; and that a name so given would be realized in its joyful import when the child should come to maturity. Boys were named immediately after circumcision, which was usually done at home; girls did not receive their names until after they were weaned.

Verse 63. *A writing table.*—A writing tablet, or small plate of wood covered with wax, and written upon with a style.

Verse 65. *All these sayings.*—Rather all these *things*, comprehending both what was done and said; ῥημα having here, as in verse 37, and other places, the sense of *matter, affair, transaction.*

Verse 67. *And prophesied.*—This does not mean merely that Zacharias poured forth an extemporary hymn of praise to God, under a special Divine afflatus,—a sense in which the verb *to prophesy* is sometimes taken; but, that in elevated and inspired strains of sacred verse, he not only uttered the praises of God, but spoke also of things to come, which is the proper and strictest sense of prophesying. For of the future results of the birth of his own child, and of the child of Mary, he expressly and emphatically speaks.

Verse 68. *Visited and redeemed.*—To *visit*, is either in judgment or mercy; here, in mercy of the highest order; for man was now visited, not by the ministry of angels or prophets, or the interposition of second causes, operating beneficially under the Divine agency, but visited by God himself,—God incarnate, and for the purpose of *redeeming*, paying the redemption PRICE to Divine justice, and ACTUALLY REDEEMING or delivering man from guilt and sin, and the power of Satan, and the reign of death.

Verse 69. *A horn of salvation in the house of David.*—This allusion to the house of David shows that he is not speaking of his own son, who was of the house of Levi, but of the Son of Mary, though yet unborn. The *horn of salvation* has had various interpretations; as, a mighty salvation, the abundance of salvation, a royal Saviour, &c. The horn is the well known emblem of potentates, heads, and founders of new powers and empires, and is used in this sense in the prophetic writings, especially in those of Daniel. The sense therefore is, "And hath raised up for us a Saviour Sovereign:" a new power springs from the decayed and fallen house of David, and a mighty potentate appears, whose office is to save, not to destroy; who puts down by his might all our spiritual enemies, and becomes our almighty friend, refuge, and benefactor.

Verse 70. *Which have been since the world began.*—Literally, *from the age.* The Jews divided time into the age from the creation to Messiah, and the age from the Messiah to the consummation of all things. The meaning is, that this great event had been the subject of prophecy from the earliest times, by a succession of holy prophets. To Christ indeed give all the prophets witness; Adam as the depositary and teacher of the first prophetic promises; Noah, as transmitting this important branch of knowledge; Abraham, Moses, and then the long succession of Hebrew prophets to Malachi. It is a common saying of the Jews that all the prophets prophesied not but of the days of Messiah.

Verse 71. *Saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.*—Figures taken from the deliverance of a nation from subjection to foreign conquerors; but that they are to be understood as figures, and in a spiritual sense, appears from verse 74, where this deliverance from the

enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 [n] The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people * by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the †tender mercy of our

[n] Gen. xxii, 16.

* Or, *for*.—† Or, *bowels of the mercy*.

hand of our enemies is connected with our *serving him without fear*, without dread of any spiritual dangers, *in holiness and righteousness before him*, that is, in his sight, therefore in true and real holiness and righteousness, *all the days of our life*. *Holiness* is sometimes understood to mean the observances rendered to God; and *righteousness*, duties to men; but holiness rather expresses the renewed state and habit of the soul, and righteousness all those external fruits which spring from it, whether of piety, justice, or mercy.

Verse 73. *The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.*—The oath referred to is that in Genesis xxii, 16, &c., which terminates in the assurance that in the seed of Abraham, that is, the Messiah, "all the nations of the earth should be blessed;" which *blessedness* Zacharias, under the prophetic Spirit, interprets in the next verses to consist in being delivered out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, and serving God without dread, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. In this only the true felicity of man consists; and it is by being raised into this high and glorious state of moral deliverance from guilty dread, and the power of Satan and sin, so as to serve or worship God with filial confidence, and to experience an entire sanctification of our nature, that we are "blessed" in the seed of Abraham. "God sends his Son Jesus to BLESS us, by turning us away from our INIQUITIES." Till then, man knows no true felicity, and never can know it in time or eternity. See note on verse 71.

Verse 76. *Prophet of the Highest.*—*The Highest* or Most High, here, is Christ himself; for he is the same being as "THE LORD" mentioned in the next clause, whose ways he was to *prepare*. See note on Matt. xi, 10. John was Christ's prophet, not only as sent by him the MASTER, for so John acknowledged him to be; but as he predicted his immediate manifestation, discoursed on his glorious character and the ends of his advent, and pointed him out as the only object of trust to guilty men. That our Lord is here called THE HIGHEST throws light upon verse 35, upon which see the note; and the terms of this passage are in unequivocal proof of the Messiah's Divinity. "*And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of* THE HIGHEST; *for thou shalt go before the face of the* LORD *to prepare* HIS *ways, to give knowledge of salvation to* HIS *people*, &c. Thus HE whose ways were prepared by John, and who beyond all objection was JESUS, is called THE HIGHEST, THE LORD, and the Jews are styled HIS PEOPLE.

Verse 77. *To give knowledge of salvation*, &c.—As *to give wisdom* is to make wise, so *to give knowledge*, δουναι γνωσιν, is to instruct, to make to know. John did not only teach repentance, but he taught the true nature of salvation, of that salvation which Messiah was to give; and he raised spiritual notions concerning it, for he taught, not that it consisted in deliverance from the Roman yoke or any other calamity, but in the *remission of sins*, and the consequent restoration of truly penitent and believing persons to the favour of God and the hope of a better life. Of the spiritual character of the teaching of John the Baptist as to this salvation, we have the proof in the conclusion of one of his discourses, John iii, 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Verse 78. *The dayspring from on high.*—This beautiful translation of our version has been objected to by some eminent critics. Campbell translates, "Who hath caused a light to spring from on high;" and Wetstein objects that the rising sun cannot be here understood by *ανατολη*, because the sun when he rises is always in the horizon, whereas this light is spoken of as coming from on high, *εξ υψους*, and must therefore be rather vertical than horizontal! This critic surely never noticed the break of day nor perceived how that before the sun appears above the horizon his light streams upward, is caught by the lofty clouds, and reflected down to the earth; so that if it were necessary to take *εξ υψους* in the strict sense, and not as it manifestly signifies, from "heaven," the celestial regions, the light would come upon us from a sufficient elevation to meet the objection. Ανατολη signi-

God; whereby the * dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

* Or, *sun-rising*, or, *branch*. Num. xxiv, 17; Isaiah xi, 1; Zech. iii, 8; Mal. iv, 2.

fies sunrise, but comprehends the whole, from the dawn to the burst of the orb of day; and the term *dayspring* was happily chosen by our translators, inasmuch as the Saviour here spoken of was not indeed at that time actually born, but upon the point of being so. The birth of John, his forerunner, and all the supernatural circumstances which had occurred, indicated certainly his approach; and thus, as the dawn, the springing of the day, they were ushering in the almost immediate rising of "the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings." Ανατολη is sometimes used by the LXX. to express the Hebrew צמח, *the branch*; but from what follows in the next verse it is plain that the whole passage is expressed in metaphors taken from the breaking of the light of morning upon the darkness of night.

Verse 79. *That sit in darkness.*—To sit, is a Hebrew mode of expression, for TO BE; *the shadow of death* not only expresses the deepest darkness, but imminent danger; and both express helpless ignorance and misery, and a state of hopeless exposure to eternal death. Thus with equal eloquence and truth does the inspired Zacharias portray the glorious mission of the Son of God, of whom his own favoured John was to be the herald and forerunner. The tender mercy of God, σπλαγχνα, *the bowels* of the Divine compassion were moved toward our lost condition, and our Lord broke upon our state of ignorance and danger like the dayspring from heaven upon the steps of a wandering traveller, bewildered in darkness, and entering the very region of the shadow of death: the darkness passes away, the true light of heavenly truth shines, the path of peace, the path which leads to peace, every kind of true felicity here and hereafter which the Hebrews expressed by the term *peace*, opens before us, and the steps of every willing mind are infallibly guided into it. Wakefield strangely applies these words to John the Baptist, not to our Lord; and, being a Socinian, and therefore placing John and Jesus on the same level, he was not revolted at speaking of a mere man as *the dayspring from on high*, giving light and life and salvation to the souls of men. But this absurdity could not have been committed, had not the true meaning of the seventy-seventh verse escaped him, as it has done many others. John's office was not only to preach repentance, but to teach the knowledge of a SPIRITUAL salvation, such as consisted in the *remission of sins*, through that *tender mercy of God*, by whom the Saviour was provided for us, and who, in conformity with the prophetic representations, is compared to the light of morning, the rising sun which sheds light, and life, and healing upon all nature. This is the manifest connection of the words.

Verse 80. *And the child grew, &c.*—He grew up in his father's house; and *waxed strong in spirit*, remarkable for strength of intellect and boldness of resolution, and his attainments in religious knowledge, under the tuition of parents equally capable of instructing him, and disposed to that duty. *And was in the deserts.*—Either it was his practice from early youth to frequent solitary places, which might easily be found in the "hill country of Juda," in which he was born; or, when arrived at manhood, he withdrew from society altogether, living upon the fruits, the locusts, and the wild honey of the wilderness, clothed in the simplest manner, and thus gave himself up to meditation and communion with God, until *the day of his showing to Israel*, when, being probably about thirty years of age, the age when the priests were admitted to their office, his warning voice broke upon a slumbering people from the depths of *the wilderness* in which he had so long hid himself, and he called them to "repent," urging that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Αναδειξις is used for the entering upon an office to which any one has been previously appointed. Here, however, it seems simply to signify *manifestation*, or *showing*, as our translators have it, in opposition to the seclusion and absolute privacy in which he had kept himself. All the wonders connected with the birth of John, doubtless, served to keep awake the expectation of the pious and spiritual. They probably extended but little farther; for though there was a general expectation of the appearance of Messiah about that time, this was, as to the Jews in general, produced by the approaching fulfilment of the times mentioned by Daniel, and especially by the visit of the magi to Jerusalem. The knowledge of this event would be carried by those Jews who came up to the great feasts, into all parts where they were settled, and some account also of the less striking, but still very remarkable, event which had happened to Zacharias. Still the circumstances of John's birth were but little known, and could not contribute much to the general expectation. But there is a distinct class of persons marked out as "wait-

ing for redemption," in a sense therefore different from that in which all the Jews might be said to wait for it: a class of spiritual persons, rightly interpreting the prophecies, and looking for a spiritual redemption. To this class of persons these events would be in the highest sense joyful and supporting.—And as the memory of them would be revived when John began his ministry, they would serve to accredit his character. Notwithstanding the relationship of the families, it was so ordered that they had no intercourse with each other after the visit of Mary to Elisabeth. No doubt the parents of John had died some years before he entered upon his ministry; and as his dwelling was among the solitudes of the wilderness, no acquaintance could be formed between him and our Lord, who remained subject to his parents, in a distant part of the country. When, therefore, John was led forth by the Spirit to commence his ministry, and to bear testimony to the Messiah, he knew not his person; and hence he received an assurance that he should be acquainted with him by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, John i, 33.

CHAPTER II.

1 Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire. 6 The nativity of Christ. 8 One angel relateth it to the shepherds: 13 many sing praises to God for it. 21 Christ is circumcised, 22 Mary purified. 28 Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ: 40 who increaseth in wisdom, 46 questioneth in the temple with the doctors, 51 and is obedient to his parents.

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be * taxed.

2 (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

* Or, *enrolled.*

CHAPTER II. Verse 1. *In those days.*—A little after the birth of John, and just before the birth of our Lord.

All the world.—Πασαν την οικουμενην properly signifies the habitable earth, but was frequently used of the Roman empire. Its meaning here cannot be extended beyond this; and many confine it to Judea, in the sense of *country or region.* Prideaux, Wall, Archbishop Newcome, and others think that the enrolment extended throughout the whole Roman empire; "that Augustus had three of these enrolments during his reign; and that this mentioned by Luke was the middle one, in the consulship of C. Marcius Censorinus, and C. Asinius Gallus, about three years before the birth of Christ, the enrolment having occupied three years before it extended to Judea, a remote province of the empire." Lardner, however, thinks that the census mentioned by St. Luke was only of the dominions of Herod, king of Judea, with whom Augustus was at that time offended, and so proceeded to treat him as a subject, and his dominions as a province by enrolment, in order to the imposition of a poll tax. That an oath of fidelity to Cesar was about this time exacted from the whole Jewish nation, appears from Josephus, which was no doubt connected with this enrolment, in which also the return of persons, ages, and property was made upon oath. Nothing can be more strikingly in proof that the sceptre was departing from Judah, and the sovereignty of Herod was rather nominal than real. Julian the apostate objected to Christ's claim, that he was by virtue of this very enrolment born one of Cesar's subjects; not knowing how truly this illustrated the ancient prophecy of Jacob, that his birth and the departing of the sceptre from Judah should be coincident.

Should be taxed.—Απογραφεσθαι rather signifies "to be enrolled with reference to being taxed." In fact, the levying of the tax did not take place until some years afterward; Herod, according to Josephus, having found means to set himself right with Augustus. Still the enrolment being made, and the lists preserved to be acted upon at pleasure, was a sufficient proof of the subjection of Herod and his dominions to the power of Rome.

Verse 2. *And this taxing was first made, &c.*—A great difficulty has here exercised the skill of commentators: the passage as it stands in our translation makes the tax or enrolment take place when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, which was not till some years after the birth of Christ. Archbishop Newcome translates with Lardner, "This was the first enrolment of Cyrenius, afterward governor of Syria;" which, by making the phrase, "governor of Syria," merely an epithet, to distinguish this Cyrenius from others of the same name, entirely obviates the

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the [a] city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country

[a] St. John, chap. vii, 42.

difficulty. But it is better to render this parenthesis as Campbell, "This first register *took effect* when Cyrenius was president of Syria." The enrolment was made in Herod's time, but was not followed up, through the policy of Herod; but when, after the deposition and banishment of Archelaus, Judea was annexed to Syria, and converted into a province, Cyrenius had only to refer to the former census for his guidance in levying the capitation tax. Of the levying of taxes upon the Jews by this Cyrenius, Josephus takes express notice. Paley argues that the word *πρωτη, first*, in the text, demonstrates that St. Luke had more than one census in contemplation. Cyrenius therefore had made two; and, it is highly probable, one before he came to his government, which corresponds with the time of Christ's birth. His title of governor of Syria is mentioned, though he became such after the event.

Verse 3. *Every one into his own city.*—Grotius explains *ιδιαν πολιν*, "the city which formerly belonged to their family." Le Clerc brings an instance from Livy where the consul orders the citizens of the allied cities admitted to the freedom of Rome, to withdraw from Rome to be taxed in their own cities.

Verse 4. *House and lineage.*—The *lineage*, *πατρια*, has a stricter sense than *οικος*, the former signifying the family or direct line of descent.

Verse 5. *To be taxed with Mary.*—These words indicate that Mary was enrolled as well as Joseph; which will prove her an heiress, however small might be her portion: otherwise she was under no necessity of going to Bethlehem; nor but for this probably would, in her circumstances, have taken so long and troublesome a journey. If, however, she were an heiress, that will be an additional proof that she was of the same tribe, since she could not marry out of it.

Verse 7. *In a manger.*—Horses in the east do not eat out of mangers, but haircloths; but if this were not a sufficient objection to this rendering, it is plain that the *φατνη*, where the child was laid, was the place where the mother also was accommodated, and a place inferior to *the inn*, in which there was no room for them. The opinion of the fathers, and tradition, makes this place subterranean; a cave in a rock, which indeed it might be, and yet be a stable; for these natural stables, affording shelter to men and their cattle, were sufficiently common in Palestine. That there were inns or houses for public accommodation of travellers, distinct from what are now called in the east caravansaries, which are designed for the reception of whole caravans, appears from the parable of the good Samaritan. That is called *πανδοκειον*, and this *καταλυμα*, which, as taken from the *loosing* of the girdles and sandals of the guests, and the packages of their beasts, could not greatly differ. There appears to have been but one such place in Bethlehem, which was a reduced town; and at this time of public concourse it was crowded. The *φατνη* was probably the stable of this inn, the place where the cattle of travellers were separately accommodated; and it might be either an enclosed court, or a collection of caves or stalls in the rock, according to tradition. That it was not a *manger* derives confirmation from the angel giving it as *a sign* to the shepherds, that they should *find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying εν τη φατνη*. Now of mangers, if they were used at all for cattle, there must have been many at Bethlehem; but as there was there but one inn, there would be but one *stabulum*, or *φατνη*, connected with it, and so it would easily be found. There was also but one babe in this inhospitable place of accommodation, and that was *Christ the Lord!* It was not indeed poverty which drove the holy family into this stable, but the circumstance that the inn was full of guests; yet was this also ordered by a higher power, that the entrance of the incarnate Saviour into our world should be one of marked humiliation, that he might so begin his course as to show, says one, "the vanity of earthly distinctions, and to consecrate suffering."

Verse 8. *Shepherds abiding in the field, &c.*—Here again the pride of man was trampled upon, and the heavenly host sent to announce the fact, neither to the crowd at Bethlehem, nor to the select, opulent, and influential few who might be collected there by the enrolment, nor to the officers of Cesar who conducted the census, but to shepherds in the solitude of the fields.

The country about Bethlehem was famous

shepherds abiding in the field, keeping * watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

* Or, *the night watches.*

for pasturage; there David had kept his father's flock, and from its "sheep folds" was he called to be king over Israel. Of their cattle, the Jewish writers observe that those which lie out in the pastures, "the cattle of the wilderness," do so "all the days of cold and heat, and do not go into the cities, until the rains descend." So that they were sent into the open field about the passover, and were kept there till the first rains, which fell in the early part of our November. From this it has been plausibly concluded that our Lord was born not earlier than March, nor later than the beginning of November; for these shepherds were probably not nomadic tribes like the Arabs, who remained out all the year. The precise month is not, however, to be determined; but if any importance had been attached under the Christian dispensation to the anniversary celebration of the events, the times of their occurrence would have been as accurately marked in the New Testament as in the Old. Neither the day nor the month of the birth of Christ can be fixed with any certainty.

Keeping watch over their flock.—Literally, "watching the watches of the night over their flock." The night was divided into four watches of three hours, or sometimes into three of four hours long. The shepherds probably relieved each other at the watches, and thus a part of them watched through the watches of the night. This was necessary to prevent the flock from being scattered, and to guard it against robbers and beasts of prey.

Verse 9. *Angel of the Lord came upon them, &c.*—This celestial messenger appeared suddenly and at once, as the word imports, and was made visible, no doubt, by that *glory of the Lord* which *shone round about them.* By "the glory of the Lord" some understand a very splendid glory, as goodly cedars are called "cedars of the Lord;" but it is more analogous to many Scripture facts, as well as more accordant with Scripture language, to consider this glory a streaming forth from the Divine shechinah, the light in which the special presence of God has ever been enshrined; in which it appears to dwell in the heaven of heavens; and by which God was so often manifested on earth.

And they were sore afraid.—Literally, *they feared a great fear.* See note on Matt. ii, 10.

Verse 10. *Behold, I bring you, &c.*—Every thing in the angel's message is emphatic. The address, *Behold!* There had been a wonderful celestial manifestation, awakening the astonishment of the shepherds; yet they are still called to *behold*, to pay attention to something beyond this glorious scene, and to which it was only subservient. The message of the angel is called a happy enunciation, an evangelizing, or proclaiming of good news, a *great joy*, χαραν μεγαλην, χαρα being put for the subject of joy; and this great subject of rejoicing was to be *to all people.* Thus the message is announced generally, and its import is not diminished when it becomes particular. For *unto you*, for your benefit, *is born this day*—so that you have no longer to wait for the Christ, who is already born—*in the city of David*, as being the son of David, *a Saviour who is*, not an inferior judge, prophet, or king, such as your history has recorded, but CHRIST the Messiah, himself THE LORD, the supreme and almighty Lord of all. For in no lower sense, as it is here used emphatically and distinctly, can the term Lord, κυριος, be used, than as it corresponds with JEHOVAH. An exact parallel is presented in Hosea i, 7: "I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord (Jehovah) their God." Such a salvation indeed as the Gospel everywhere describes, —which is the deliverance of the SOULS of men from guilt and vice of every kind, their restoration to the favour of God, and to his moral image, the rescue of their BODIES from the power of death, and their RECOVERY to immortal life, and the glorification and eternal beatification of their whole person in the very presence of God, necessarily implies the Divinity of the Redeemer. He who THUS saves, must be "the God of salvation," and the object of absolute trust on account both of his unlimited *power*, and his boundless goodness.

Verse 13. *And suddenly there was with the angel, &c.*—An appropriate accompaniment to such a message: not one angel, but a multitude of the heavenly host now become

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it*, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 [b] And when eight days were ac-

[b] Genesis, chap. xvii, 12.

visible, and break the silence of night by a song of celestial praise. The subject of this song is, in fact, a characteristic description of that new dispensation which the Messiah was to introduce: it illustrates the glory of God, establishes peace upon earth, opens the benevolence of God to men; and for all these things the heavenly host praise God. Their own knowledge of God was enlarged and heightened; the plans of the Divine government, in connection with redemption, which had engaged their attention and interest, opened before them in new and richer scenes, throwing equal light upon the past and the future; their interest in a race of intelligent and immortal beings, like themselves, was gratified by the grand ministry of *peace* and reconciliation, which was now about to be commenced by the Divine Teacher himself; and the manifestation of the source of Divine good will to *men*, without exception,—the Gentile nations as well as the Jews, opened prospects of the recovery and advancement of the world, on which benevolent and holy natures like theirs could not dwell without supreme delight, nor without referring the whole, in transports of praise, to their great Author.

The critical attempts which have been made to bring this doxology into two members instead of three, or at least to prove that it can have but two parts in sense, though three in form, has arisen chiefly from taking *peace on earth* and *good will toward men*, to express nearly the same meaning, and so to imply a tautology not to be looked for in such a composition; though some stress is also laid upon the absence of *και* before the last clause. The latter reason has no weight when the abrupt form of expression, which strong emotion usually adopts, is considered; and as to the former, the sense is sufficiently distinct to warrant a distinct recognition of each. *Peace on earth* expresses, no doubt, the first great result of the Gospel, the reconciliation of man to God, which was to be effected by Christ, and the effecting of which, in a manner that should consist with the glory of God, and manifest it in the loftier views it should give of all his perfections, constitutes the grand peculiarity of the Gospel, and could not be overlooked in this DESCRIPTIVE song of the angels. But *good will to men* is the effect of this reconciliation. All the kind purposes and benevolent intentions of God toward the world take their rise from "the reconciliation for sin" made by the Messiah; and when individual man is actually reconciled through him to God, then the *good will*, the benevolence of God, is open toward him in its fulness, in time and in eternity. Man, once under wrath, stands to God only in a relation of friendship, and shall be its object for ever. There is here, therefore, no tautology, but an enunciation of distinct truths, each of the highest importance, and all redounding to the glory of God *in the highest heavens*.

Verse 15. *The shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, &c.*—Literally, "the men, the shepherds," a Hebrew pleonasm.

Verse 19. *Kept all these things, and pondered, &c.*—The shepherds related what they had seen and heard, with the confirmatory sign, their finding the child in the place pointed out by the angel; and *all* who heard *wondered*. But Mary *kept and pondered these things:* she had a key to their import and meaning which others had not; and she preserved every event in memory, and *revolved* it, or weighed its import, in her mind, by remarking its connection with the great event which had taken place, and the intimations which the angel had given of the character and work of the great Deliverer; and thus she saw the Divine plans opening before her, though not without mysterious, and probably for a time, to her, inexplicable occurrences, which threw her back upon those deep musings which appear to have characterized her, and no doubt often painfully tried her faith. These exercises, of which she perhaps had a larger share than any mortal, were but now commencing.

Verse 21. *Eight days were accomplished,*

complished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called [c] JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, [d] Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to [e] that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought

[c] Matt. i, 21.—[d] Exod. xiii, 2; Num. xviii, 15.

[e] Lev. xii, 2, 6.

&c.—This is according to the Jewish mode of speaking of time, and signifies when the eighth day was come. Our Lord being made "under the law," was circumcised; for, as a descendant of Abraham according to the flesh, he was as a man bound to observe all the religious institutions which had been enjoined. Circumcision was a token of his descent from Abraham; and through it he could claim all his privileges as a Jew, which without it he could not have done.—He could not, for instance, have entered the temple.

Verse 22. *Days of her purification.*—A woman after bearing a male child could not go into the sanctuary until the fortieth day, The first-born son was presented in the temple, and this in Mary's case was done at the same time. The first-born belonged to God, and were presented to the priest as his representative at the eastern gate. Here Mary appeared, and for the first time "the Lord came to his temple," though in the form of a helpless infant. The sacrifice offered on these occasions was a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin-offering; but among the poorer sort of people a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons sufficed. This is so expressly put in the law, Lev. xii, 6–8, upon the ground of the woman "not being able to bring a lamb," that the fact is conclusive, as to the humble circumstances of Mary and Joseph. It indicates too that the presentation in the temple took place before the visit of the magi, and the enriching of the holy family with the presents brought by them, and which Providence designed to be their supply for their journey into Egypt.

Verses 25, 26. *Simeon.*—Some have thought him "Simeon the just," president of the sanhedrim, and father of Gamaliel, but upon insufficient evidence, or rather upon unsatisfactory conjecture. Whatever he was, the moral greatness of his character is strongly marked. He was just in regard to his conduct and observance of the law; *devout*, *ευλαβης*, one who had great *reverence* for God, expressed, no doubt, in acts of habitual prayer and praise. His devotion was not, therefore, that of the formal Pharisees, but was the result of reverential affections to the Divine majesty, a sentiment composed of AWE and LOVE, blended with and controlling each other. Still farther, *he waited for the consolation of Israel*, that is, the Messiah; for with the Jews this was one of his titles. "May I never see the consolation," is one form of an oath among them. But when it is said that Simeon *waited for the consolation*, as of other pious persons of the same time, that they *waited for redemption*, another name of the Messiah, the meaning must be emphatic. They waited in some peculiar sense; for the whole nation of the Jews waited for Messiah's advent, and prayed for it. We may therefore conclude that as these eminently spiritual persons among the Jews had better views of the nature and office of the Messiah, in consequence of their spirituality of mind, so they waited in another manner, not with the impatient longing of a people expecting to be led on to victory and conquest, but with earnest desires to be partakers of that personal and spiritual redemption which the Messiah was to accomplish for his people. Of this class was Simeon; but the *Holy Ghost* also *was upon him*, not in an ordinary way, as upon all good men, but in the spirit of prophecy. For this spirit had been restored, after having ceased from the time of Malachi, about the birth of our Lord, and in evident connection with that event. It fell upon Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary; and had rested for some time upon Simeon, to whom it had been revealed, that *he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ*. "The Lord's Christ," or Jehovah's Messiah, is a phrase found in the Targum. Thus, on Isaiah iv, 2, "In that time Jehovah's Messiah shall be for joy and glory."

Verse 27. *By the Spirit, &c.*—Under the impulse and incitement of the Holy Ghost, at the time of Christ's presentation, and the payment of the redemption money for him as

in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and

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the first-born, which is called *doing for him according to the custom of the law*. The end was, that Simeon, who was an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and probably known there as a man endued with the prophetic spirit,—a circumstance itself which would excite attention, especially as he seems to have publicly declared that, though an aged man, he should not die before he had seen the Christ,—might give a testimony to him under the influence of inspiration, expressing itself in that prophetic and elevated song which he then poured forth.

Verse 29. *Depart in peace, &c.*—The expression is exceedingly beautiful and affecting. Απολυειν is *to loose, to let go*, after a previous detention, from country, home, or any other desirable and longed-for place. The aged saint had been detained from that heavenly rest for which he had sighed, but for the joyful purpose of beholding with his eyes what so many "kings and righteous men had desired to see, and were not able,"—the Christ in the flesh. No sooner then does he see the child than, in a rapture of joy, he takes him in his arms, blesses God, and welcomes so gracious a token of dismissal to the kingdom of his Father. He had nothing greater to see on earth; the *salvation* of God was manifested; and he now hastens to heaven to watch the scene, and enjoy the glorious benefits of this stupendous incarnation of the Son of God. Salvation is one of the names of Messiah, Gen. xlix, 18; Isaiah xlix, 6; and he is so called as the Author of that deliverance of man from guilt, sin, and death, of which all the instances of the salvation of the Jews from temporal calamities were but the feeble types.

Verses 31, 32. *Prepared before the face.*—This preparation, ordination, or arrangement, expresses the perfection of the Divine plan; complete in all its parts and provisions, and ready, upon the fulness of every time and season arriving, to display itself, and come into efficient operation. *Before the face of all people*, denotes the publicity which was now to be given to this prepared, arranged system of salvation; and the event issued, according to the prophecy,—the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; his worship and honour, his Church and people, his Gospel and its ministry, the facts, doctrines, hopes, sanctions, and institutions of his religion, are all *before the world;* not confined to the Jews, but spread publicly before the face of all mankind, that they may be known, and reverenced, and embraced.—Hence it is added, *a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* Christ, before called *the Salvation*, is now called *a Light*, with reference to Isaiah xlix, 6, "I will give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." Some take the words of the evangelist to be transposed for φως εθνων εις αποκαλυψιν, *a Light of the Gentiles for revelation*, which does not affect the sense: *a light* is the emblem of an instructer; and the effect of teaching is to enlighten or make a revelation of truth to the minds of men.

Verse 34. *Set for the fall and rising again, &c.*—It has been taken for granted, without, however, any just ground, that the allusion is here to "the stone of stumbling and rock of offence," mentioned by the prophets. But this only perplexes the meaning of a very plain passage. Christ was *set*, appointed, by the Divine wisdom, in such a way that none but the humble and penitent should be benefited by his mission, and that the proud and worldly should have their condemnation increased by it, through no fatality or predestination, but through their own fault and folly, turning that unto "death," which was "ordained for life." Many in Israel, therefore, rejecting his holy doctrines, and despising the mere spiritualities which he offered to them, fell into the guilt of rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, for which "wrath came upon them to the uttermost." On the other hand many *rose*. Our translation, *rising again*, would intimate that the same persons who fell, afterward rose, which was not certainly the fact; but αναστασις often signifies *a rising up*, without the idea of reiteration. True faith in Christ raises man up from the degradation of sin, and that prostrate, spurned, and incurable condition to which he is reduced by his fallen nature and his vicious habits, into the favour and image of God, the dignity of communion with him, and the lofty hopes of immortality and eternal life. Every Jew, when Christ came, had the alternative placed before him, to *fall* by unbelief, or to *rise* by faith; and wherever Christ is preached, the same result follows, as to every individual

said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the [f] fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

[f] Isaiah viii, 14; Rom. ix, 32.

Let no one suppose that he can reject the Gospel through positive infidelity, or neglect it through indifference, and remain irresponsible. Nor let him assume, even, that all that can follow is the loss of some good which might otherwise have been secured. A positive offence is committed in either case against the majesty, the authority, and the mercy of God; an offence to be signally punished, not by the loss of good merely, but by the infliction of evil. He that will not *rise*, through the appointed Redeemer, must *fall* beneath the stroke of his vengeance as Judge,—a fall of which the terrible disasters brought upon the Jewish nation were but the faint types, however terrible.

For a sign which shall be spoken against.—The metaphor supposed to be implied here, "a butt or mark to be shot at," is fanciful.—The publicity of Christ's character, his claims as God manifest in the flesh, and the public exhibition of his cross, as the only ground for man to hope for salvation, with the array of public miracles which attested the whole, appear to be comprehended in the term *sign*,—a public representation of something remarkable and striking. And this, says Simeon, is, or shall be, *a sign spoken against*, or *contradicted*, and even blasphemed, as it has been in all ages by Jews, Mohammedans, and infidels; and too often, in its more spiritual manifestations, by formalists and hypocrites, professing a religion which they do not understand, and which, if they did, they would contradict and hate, as, in fact, they do when it is presented to them in its true forms of power and purity.

Verse 35. *A sword shall pierce, &c.*—Words which predicted the poignant, agonized feelings of the mother when she heard the "contradiction of sinners" against her immaculate Son, saw him hung, and heard him taunted, upon the cross. Wounds of the mind are often said, in all languages, to be inflicted by "arrows" and "swords."—This clause, being addressed to Mary particularly, seems rightly regarded as a parenthesis; and what follows, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*, is connected with the rejecting of, and speaking against Christ, before mentioned. Grotius understands the *thoughts* to mean the *real disposition*, which is indeed true; but διαλογισμοι signifies the thoughts (so to speak) in action, in a state of disputing, reasoning, and forming different conclusions. Nor has any thing ever opened the moral state of the heart of men, thrown such light upon the actuating principles of human nature, and brought every part of the character of men of all ranks under such searching and demonstrative views, as Christ and his holy Gospel. The rejection of its truth because of its purity; of its love, because of the confession of our helplessness and unworthiness which it supposes; of its true worship, because of its spirituality; and the hatred it has brought upon its meek and benevolent followers, in all ages, for their very devotedness to Christ, and their zeal for the salvation of others; are all such manifestations of the dislike of man to light and conviction, his pride, his carnality, his haughty enmity to holiness and holy men, his very hatred of God as the world had never witnessed before. The fact of the persecution of this Divine religion of Christ, in his followers, and the habitual hatred of THE WORLD to his true DISCIPLES, whether that world has worn a Pagan or a Christian garb, are all circumstances which *have revealed the thoughts of many hearts*, and poured a flood of light upon the fallen state of human nature.

Verses 36, 37. *Anna, a prophetess.*—Anna, the same as Hannah, signifies *grace* or *gracious*. She is called a prophetess either with regard to the spirit of prophecy falling upon her at this time; or, like Simeon, she was an instance of its restoration to the Jewish Church, a little before the birth of Christ, but in exclusive reference, as it seems from all the instances, to that event. This aged woman had given up herself entirely to devotional exercises, being no doubt, exempted by her circumstances from any other employment. She therefore *departed not from the temple*, but was present there at all the stated services; for this is obviously the meaning of departing not from the temple, and of "dwelling in the courts of the Lord's house for ever," the wish of David; not that she was always in the temple, but at the morning and evening service, to which she might add some of those occasional ones which were often occurring, as in the case of the presentation of our Lord, during which

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in *Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem ε every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the

* Or, *Israel.*

ε Deut. xvi, 1.

service she *came in.* To this she added fastings and prayers night and day. These prayers were her private closet devotions; for at night she would have no access to the temple.

Verse 38. *Gave thanks.*—In an inspired, prophetic composition, for the birth and sight of Messiah, whom she recognized by prophetic impulse, or was present while Simeon recognized him, and took him in his arms. Her song of praise is not recorded, as being perhaps an echo of Simeon's. And she spoke of him no doubt in the same inspired strains to all that *looked for redemption in Jerusalem*, that is, for the Redeemer, but with reference, not to Jewish worldly views, but to *the redemption* which he was to effect. We thus learn that there was a pious remnant in Jerusalem, looking out with desire and confidence for the advent of the great salvation of God, the Redeemer promised in all their sacred books; and to these Anna appears to have paid a joyful visit, acquainting them with what she had seen and heard in the temple. It is interesting to observe that these pious people appear to have had mutual knowledge and pious intercourse with each other. They formed at that time the true spiritual Church, within the nominal fallen Church, of Jerusalem. And we may gather that this number of spiritual persons was not large; although a great deterioration of the Jewish Church, both in doctrine and in manners, appears to have taken place during the thirty years which elapsed between this event and the entrance of our Lord upon his public ministry.

Verse 40. *And the child grew, &c.*—Of John it was also said that he *grew and waxed strong in spirit;* but of our Lord it is added, *filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.* Some commentators refer the last clause to the beauty of his form. So Campbell, "adorned with a Divine gracefulness;" and Wetstein before him: "*Ea erat venustas, et dignitas formæ in puero, ut omnes intelligerent a Deo ita ornatum esse.*" But the expression is not *grace* simply, which has a large signification; but the *grace of God was upon him*, which cannot be understood of a corporeal endowment, but of the special favour of God, and all the moral consequences which result from it. Besides, from the total silence of the gospels on the subject, it would not seem that, when Christ had entered upon his ministry, his personal appearance exhibited any thing remarkable. Under strong excitement it probably did, as when he drove the traders out of the temple: and when unbending himself in more familiar intercourse with his beloved disciples, what we call expression, but which differs from form, was in him, no doubt, like himself, peculiar, and in its effect most influential. But generally he appeared on a level with the common order of men; and if so when grown up and in his ministry, there seems no reason to assume that he should, as to aspect and manner, be endowed in infancy and youth with a distinguishing gracefulness and elegance. The words of the text are infinitely more important, as they prove that from infancy the Holy Spirit was the tutor of the human mind of Christ; that he endowed it with his own gifts; *filled it with wisdom*, not at once,—for "he grew in wisdom" as well as "stature,"—but as the strength and capacity of the faculties of the human mind, subject, no doubt, as ours, to the control and limitation of the progressive growth and vigour of the body, admitted; suggested the subjects of his holy musings; fixed the strong and infallible principles of all truth in his judgment; and carried them into exact application in his meditations, as fit subjects were presented to him; enriched his imagination with imagery the most appropriate as the dress of truth; gave the purest taste; and kindled in equal proportion with all these lights of the intellect the fire of the affections; and thus rendered THE MAN, when mature, fully fitted for that perfect but mysterious intercourse with the DIVINITY within, which existed in a degree from the first; but which was probably established in all its FULNESS when the Holy Spirit completed his work as to the human nature, and at his baptism "descended and rested upon him," in that plenitude which is described to be "without measure."

Verse 42. *Twelve years old.*—The males were obliged to go up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts, the passover, pentecost, and the tabernacles. That it is stated to be

days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers,

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the custom of Joseph and Mary to go to Jerusalem every year to the passover might seem to be superfluous; but as women only went up at the feast of the passover, and that as to them was purely voluntary, as the Jewish writers expressly inform us, the practice of Mary in going up at this feast regularly with Joseph is probably mentioned as a proof of her piety; and also to mark the feast, of which mention is about to be made, to be the passover, since Mary was present at it. The male children did not come fully under "the yoke of the law," as to fasting and other religious exercises, and attendance at the feasts, until thirteen years of age. Hence it is said in Zohar, "He that is worthy at thirteen years of age is called a son of the congregation of Israel." But the Jews laudably began at a much earlier period to accustom their children to religious observances; they made them fast at as early an age as they could bear it, until at twelve years they could fast a whole day; and they took their young children with them to the synagogues, "that they might be ready in the commandments." That our Lord was taken to the feast of the passover a year before he was legally obliged to be present, was an indication of the piety of the parents, and of his own respect for the public institutions of religion.

Verse 43. *Fulfilled the days.*—The seven days of unleavened bread; so that they remained throughout the whole duration of the feast, which they were not bound to do.

Knew not of it.—The custom was to travel in companies; relations, neighbours, and townspeople, choosing to consort together for protection and convenience. In this way they travelled a day's journey from Jerusalem; and as the *συνοδια*, or caravan, was large, and they had many "kinsfolk and acquaintance in it," they were under no alarm at the absence of their son, till the day's journey was completed, and the family groups would be collected for the evening meal.

Verses 46, 47. *After three days they found him.*—This, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time, is equivalent to, *on the third day*. They had journeyed one day from Jerusalem, on the second they travelled back, and on the third they found him.

In the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors.—The temple includes its courts, which were collectively so called. Here were the sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy-two members with the nasi or president at their head, and the Father of the court, *Ab-beth-din*, on his right hand. This sat in the room Gazith. Then there was the lesser council of twenty-three judges, which sat in the gate of the court of Israel; and another council which sat in the gate of the court of the Gentiles. There was also a synagogue in the temple called the great synagogue, to which several celebrated doctors were attached. Lightfoot has adduced examples to show that it was permitted and customary in any of these assemblies of doctors, of learned scribes and rabbins, to propose questions concerning the law. These courts were also open, and there was generally a full audience of the people. Those who questioned, and those who answered, did it before the public. The doctors of this time at Jerusalem were of great celebrity. There was Hillel, and Shammai; one the president, the other the vice-president of the sanhedrim, who had each authority enough to divide the whole body of the learned into two schools on the interpretation of the law of divorce. Simeon, the son of Hillel, was also a distinguished man; and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, the author of the Chaldee paraphrase; and several others, noted in the subsequent writings of the Jews as among their wisest and greatest authorities. The sanhedrim sat in a semicircle; and before them sat the disciples of the wise men in rows. But our Lord was found sitting *in the midst* of the doctors; having, probably, through admiration of the wisdom he had shown in the commencement of the conversation, been called up and placed there as a mark of honour.

Hearing them, and asking questions.—They were employed in controversies and determinations, during which the disciples of the rabbins were permitted to ask questions to gain information. It would seem also that this was allowed to any one, as our Lord was not the scholar of any rabbi; and indeed the Jewish doctors were pleased to be interrogated, and placed their fame upon the readiness and skill with which they answered questions. They also often chose to communicate knowledge by asking questions of their disciples, thereby suggesting trains of thought, calling their powers into exercise, and taking occasion from their replies to form other questions to lead at length to the right

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and *stature, and in favour with God and man.

* Or, *age.*

conclusion. Our Lord heard the debates and the divisions of the doctors, probably the questions of some of their disciples, and the answers given. He also put in his questions, was answered, and was himself questioned; so that the attention of all was strongly fixed upon him; *and all that* heard him were astonished *at his understanding* in the law, and the Scriptures in general, *and* at his *answers*, those which he gave to the questions proposed to him. The common notion of his *disputing* in the temple with the doctors, is unwarranted by the history. Nothing strictly controversial seems to have arisen; but the subjects were such as to unfold so much of that "wisdom with which he was filled," such deep and comprehensive views of sacred subjects, as at once astonished the assembly and engaged their good will.

Verse 48. *They were amazed, &c.*—Campbell's attempt to connect this with the foregoing, and thus transfer the amazement from the parents to the auditors, is ingenious, but not solid. His parents were not amazed at his wisdom, like the rest, because they knew it: but at finding him, not only among the auditors of Jewish doctors in the sanhedrim, but placed honourably in the midst of them, and exciting their admiration by his answers.

Thy father and I.—So she calls Joseph, as being his father by marriage and adoption, and so popularly called, as with us. Still more emphatically so among the Jews, whose maxim was, "Not he that begets, but he that brings up, is the father." So great a stress did they lay on education.

Verses 49–52. *How is it that ye sought me?*—A mild reproof for their too great anxiety, since, knowing who he was, they might have been persuaded of his safety.—This was, however, the predominance of natural affection, not of doubt. *Wist ye not*, knew ye not, ye ought to have considered, that I came into the world to accomplish the special will and great designs of God, in human redemption. Of this, intimation had been given them in the angelic visions they had had before his birth, and in the import of the name Jesus, a Saviour, which, by Divine command, as a DESCRIPTIVE name, they had given him. Thus he intimated to them that they ought to have stood prepared for his acting in reference to the accomplishment of that will, and not to be surprised if his conduct should appear extraordinary. *That I must be about my Father's business.* The sentence is elliptical, εν τοις του πατρος μου. The Syriac version has, "in my Father's house;" and in this sense the words are taken by several of the fathers. Examples also of the same form appear in Esther vii, 9, εν τοις Αμαν, *in the house of Haman;* and in Josephus, εν τοις Καισαιρες, *in Cesar's house.* But the objection to this interpretation is, that it gives no reason why his parents ought not to have sought him sorrowing, or the very insufficient and improbable one that they had no need to have sought him elsewhere than in the temple, where they ought to have concluded he would be, as the house of his Father. Our translators therefore have supposed the ellipsis to be supplied with πραγμασι, and properly render it *about my Father's business;* and unquestionably the phrase ειναι εν τινι signifies *to be engaged in any occupation*, and that both in classical and Hellenistic writers, of which Philo and the LXX. furnish examples. And thus the reason given is apt and convincing: it became him to prefer doing the will of God to all other considerations. That his parents *understood not the saying*, intimates that they did not understand its full import; they saw not how this circumstance was a performing of his Father's business, or what was its precise connection with the great end of his coming into the world. *But Mary kept all these sayings in her heart;* and to her at length was given the joyful satisfaction of being able fully to comprehend the deepest meaning of every thing he had said, although for a long time veiled in mystery, by comparing his remembered sayings, first with that course of remarkable events which in a few years were constantly opening to her observation, and then with the whole grand series, including the resurrection and ascension. To us, indeed, also the import of this saying is largely laid open. To be sowing the seeds of heavenly wisdom in the Jewish council, and in the disciples of the doctors who were present, and in the hearts of the wondering hearers,—who would be the more attracted to the truth which was uttered, through the youth of him that so gravely, yet modestly, declared it,—agreed with, and in-

deed explained, the spirituality of his mission. This was to be about his Father's business, teaching the ignorant, correcting the erring, and confirming truth where it was already apprehended. We also see, through the interesting opening which this account makes into the history of his youth, how perfect a unity and consistency runs through the whole life of the blessed Saviour; and how completely, in every age, it accorded with a *sinless* character, and the fact of the union of the Divine with the human nature. He had not then entered upon his office as Teacher; but it is clear what were the subjects which at this early period occupied his thoughts, and with what serious interest he was preparing for his great work of "teaching and preaching the kingdom of God."

Was subject to them.—Not only regarded them with dutiful reverence, but, as the early fathers teach, and which is indeed probable, worked at his father's business, and under his direction assisted in the support of the family. Three times every year he would, however, go up to the feasts at Jerusalem; but we never read of his frequenting the council or courts again, or exhibiting any thing remarkable. Thus the veil of mystery was again drawn around him, saving that we are informed that he grew *in wisdom and in stature*, or age; meaning that with his age his wisdom became still more conspicuous; *and in favour with God and man;* all who knew him showing the greatest affection and veneration for him—perhaps all the people of Nazareth; for as yet he had not begun his ministry, he had not preached against their formality and other vices, he had not become their faithful reprover. When he took that office, they sought his life! All these interesting particulars which Luke alone has recorded, and those concerning John Baptist he doubtless collected from those diligent inquiries and conversations with "eye witnesses," which he tells us in his preface he made on these subjects. He had the opportunity, not only of conversing with different apostles, as Peter and James, but also probably with Mary, the mother of our Lord.

CHAPTER III.

1 *The preaching and baptism of John:* 15 *his testimony of Christ.* 20 *Herod imprisoneth John.* 21 *Christ, baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven.* 23 *The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upward.*

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

CHAPTER III. Verse 1. *The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar.*—Reckoning from his being made colleague with Augustus in the empire, *Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea.* After the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus succeeded to Judea; but he was deposed by Augustus, and thenceforth Judea was governed by his procurators. Pilate was the fourth procurator in succession, and held that office about ten years. He was appointed about a year before John the Baptist began his ministry.

Herod being tetrarch of Galilee.—See the note on Matt. ii, 1. This was Herod Antipas, the same that married Herodias, slew John the Baptist, and to whom our Lord was sent by Pilate to be examined, Luke xxiii, 6, 7. *Philip,* the *tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis,* countries which lay between the land of Israel and Syria, was the brother of Herod, and rightful husband of Herodias, and father of the daughter of Herodias, who danced before Herod, and pleased him so as to draw from him the rash vow which led to the murder of the holy John. *Abilene,* in Cœlo-Syria, was a part of the domains of Herod the Great, and was, on the death of Herod, given to Lysanias, a descendant of a former proprietor, from whom it had been taken away by Antony.

Verse 2. *Annas and Caiaphas being high priests.*—Annas was made high priest and deposed by the Romans. Three of his sons were put into that office in succession, and then his son-in-law Caiaphas, who continued high priest throughout the administration of Pilate. But Annas had still the honorary title of "high priest," though deposed, and was a man of great rank and influence among the Jews

The word of the Lord came unto John.—Having been trained up by communion with God, in the solitudes of the wilderness, *the word of the Lord came to him,* the command of God was laid upon him, by voice or vision, or some other mode of Divine mani-

3 [a] And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, [b] The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, [c] O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits * worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, [d] He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, † Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your ‡ wages.

15 And as the people were § in ex-

[a] Matt. iii, 1.—[b] Isaiah xl, 3.—[c] Matt. iii, 7.
* Or, *meet for.*

[d] James ii, 15; 1 John iii, 17.—† Or, *put no man in fear.*—‡ Or, *allowance.*—§ Or, *in suspense.*

festation, to commence his mission; and with that commenced the doctrine he was to preach, and the testimony he was to bear to the Christ, which were fully revealed to him; together with other particulars which suppose a very distinct and explicit communication.

The account which St. Luke gives of the preaching of John differs not from that in St. Matthew, chap. iii, on which see the notes. In the tenth and following verses this evangelist introduces some new circumstances.

Verse 11. *What shall we do then?*—These were probably the truly penitent, who asked advice as to their conduct, especially as to bringing forth "fruits meet for repentance;" and he commends to them the cultivation of a benevolent and liberal spirit; which would be most unequivocally expressed by giving clothing to the naked, and bread to the hungry: for the precept is not to be taken literally, as though it were a crime to have two coats; but as teaching that from our abundance the wants of others are to be supplied, and that there can be no true repentance where there is no renunciation of a selfish and unfeeling covetousness.

Verses 12, 13. *The publicans.*—Many of those had been wrought upon by his preaching, and naturally ask his advice also, as to their particular conduct. He does not in his reply affirm the occupation to be unlawful, as many of the Jews thought, for governments must be upheld by tribute, and that must be collected: but they were exposed to great temptations from the practices of their fellows, from the low standard of rectitude which existed among them, and from favourable opportunities to practise injustice; and he therefore made it the test of their sincerity, the "fruit meet for repentance" in their case, that they should *exact no more than was appointed them;* that is, appointed by law, or fixed by the authority of the supreme power.

Verse 14. *The soldiers.*—These were most probably the soldiers of Herod; for the Roman soldiers were little likely to go to his baptism. Many of these also had been touched with a sense of their sins under his preaching, and, like the publicans, came to be baptized. They also asked for practical direction in that new state and profession into which the baptism of John had introduced them; and here it has been often justly remarked that he does not exhort them to abandon a military life, as inconsistent with piety and godliness, but simply prohibits those vices which the licentiousness of the soldiery in those days most encouraged. They were therefore to *do violence to no man;* that is, to put no man in fear, as the word signifies, either from wanton cruelty, or in order to extort property by threats of violence; nor *accuse any falsely,* in order to obtain reward for a seeming zeal in the discharge of duty, or to share in the fines and confiscations inflicted upon suspected persons; and *be content with your wages*

pectation, and all men * mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, [e] I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 [f] But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, [g] it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was

* Or, *reasoned*, or, *debated*.—[e] Matt. iii, 11.—[f] Matt. xiv, 3.

[g] Matt. iii, 13.

οψωνια, which includes meat, money, and all lawful perquisites.

Verse 15. *The people were in expectation, &c.*—St. Luke hastens to conclude his account of John, that he may without interruption pursue that of Christ. He expresses here, in few words, what St. John has dwelt more largely upon in the beginning of his gospel. The impression of John's appearance and ministry was so great, that for some time the minds of men were *in expectation*,—they looked out for some farther developement of John's character, being in suspense whether he might not be the Christ. On this point they *mused*, or reasoned in their hearts, until *John answered*, made an explicit declaration in answer to the priests sent from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?" St. Luke omits this circumstance, but gives the material part of John's disclaimer, and his testimony to Jesus.

Verse 16. *I indeed baptize you with water, &c.*—See the note on Matt. iii, 11.

Whose fan is in his hand, &c.—See the note on Matt. iii, 12.

Verses 19, 20. *Herod the tetrarch being reproved.*—See note on Matt. xiv, 3, 4. St. Luke adds that the faithful John reproved Herod, not merely for marrying Herodias, but *for all the evils he had done*. That is, he had habitually reproved him, as often probably as he had access to him, which appears not to have been unfrequent. And for a time his reproofs were not wholly lost, nor were they malignantly resented till the darling sin, the choice and favourite lust was touched, till the incestuous marriage with his brother Philip's wife was denounced. Then indeed Herod *added this evil above all, that he shut up John in prison*; which was a sin, not only of injustice against man, but a crime against God, whose prophet John was; and it proved the occasion of a still greater sin than even this; for the imprisonment led finally to his murder, which Herod does not appear at first to have the least intended. Thus sin draws on sin, in rapid and frightful increase!

Verse 21. *Now when all the people, &c.*—Not that our Lord was baptized publicly when others were baptized. That was private between him and John; but the meaning is, that at the period when John's ministry excited the most attention, when multitudes were coming to him to be baptized in Jordan, that is, in the early period of it, Christ went and submitted to that ordinance also. On our Lord's baptism, see the notes on Matt. iii, 13–17.

Verse 23. *Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, &c.*—It has been much disputed by critics, whether these words, which are somewhat indefinite, indicate that our Lord was then entering his thirtieth year, or had completed it. Grotius contends that *ωσει* often expresses excess as well as deficiency, and that it here implies that Christ came to his baptism a few days after the birthday of thirty complete years.—Lightfoot, on the contrary, observes that the current year, however lately begun, was reckoned as a year in a person's age, and that *αρχομενος*, joined with *ωσει*, shows that he was *beginning to be as it were thirty*, or just past his twenty-ninth year. Many more recent critics take the sense to be, "And Jesus himself beginning, or when beginning (to teach) was about thirty years of age," which assumes an ellipsis of *διδασκειν*. The notion that the period of admission into the Jewish priesthood, which was thirty years complete, was respected at the time in which our Lord began his public ministry, has perhaps no foundation; and the principal reason of recording the age of Christ was to show

supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

24 Which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph,

25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David,

32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Methusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

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that he was in the vigour of life; that he neither commenced his ministry when inexperienced, nor when his faculties had begun to suffer from age. Still it is likely that Jewish notions were not altogether disregarded, and that, as they thought thirty years to be the most fitting period for entering upon public offices, this was conformed to both in the case of John and Jesus; and with reference to this impression it was recorded. The words, after all the criticism expended upon them, appear simply to mean that our Lord, at the time of his baptism, was just entering upon the completion of thirty years, εἶναι merely being supplied after ἀρχόμενος.

As was supposed.—This was the general belief; the account of the miraculous conception not being made public, but reserved in the breasts of Joseph and Mary. When it was first declared does not appear. The absence of all allusion to it in the subsequent history of the Gospel makes it probable that it was not declared even to the disciples themselves, so that they as well as others *supposed* him to be the son of Joseph as well as Mary, and that it was one of those things which Mary kept in her heart, under Divine direction, till after the resurrection from the dead. The previous publication of it must have exposed her to numerous and often captious interrogatories after Christ had entered upon his ministry; and when there was so much division of opinion respecting him with his enemies, it might have exposed her to some danger, or placed her, at least, in very trying circumstances. These considerations make it strongly probable that this fact was not made known to any during the life of Christ. St. Luke, however, by his qualifying clause, *being* AS WAS SUPPOSED *the son of Joseph*, shows that it had been among the earliest facts made known to the first disciples after the ascension, and was, without doubt, received. Hence it makes a part of two of the gospels, St. Matthew's and St. Luke's. On the genealogy of our Lord, see the notes on Matt. i, 2.

Verse 38. *Which was the son of God.*—Adam is so called, as having no human father, and not being begotten, but created immediately by the Divine power.

CHAPTER IV.

1 The temptation and fasting of Christ. 13 He overcometh the devil: 14 beginneth to preach. 16 The people of Nazareth admire his gracious words. 33 He cureth one possessed of a devil, 38 Peter's mother-in-law, 40 and divers other sick persons. 41 The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it. 43 He preacheth through the cities.

1 And [a] Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt * worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 ¶ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ [b] And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him

[a] Matt. iv, 1.—* Or, *fall down before me.*

[b] Matt. xiii, 54.

CHAPTER IV. Verse 2. *Being forty days tempted.*—St. Matthew places the temptations which are recorded at the close of the forty days; but it follows from his account that there must have been previous temptations, since it was for this purpose that our Lord was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Hence there is no discrepancy in the accounts. St. Luke also varies the order of the specific temptations of which an account is given; but as nothing depends upon the mere circumstance of their succession, the order became a matter of indifference. On our Lord's temptation, see the notes on Matt. iv, 1–11.

Verse 16. *As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.*—Let it be observed that to attend the public worship of God on the Sabbath, in the synagogue, was THE CUSTOM of our Lord; so that the obligation of this duty upon us cannot be questioned. On synagogues, see note on Matt. iv, 23.

And stood up for to read.—By this action he signified his desire to read the lesson for the day, which any might do to whom the book was delivered, but not without leave of the ruler of the synagogue; for so the Jewish rule runs, according to Maimonides: "A reader may not read until the chief of the congregation bids him read." It was the custom to stand at the reading of the law and the prophets. Every Sabbath day, the Jews say seven persons read,—a priest, a Levite, and five Israelites.

Verses 17, 20. *There was delivered to him the book of the Prophet Esaias.*—This would be done at the bidding of the president by the *chazan*, one of the ministers of the synagogue. The sacred books were taken out of the chest in which they were deposited with great reverence. It would seem by the book of Isaiah being delivered to Christ, that each book was kept separately; no doubt for convenience of reference, and also for holding in the hand, as they were written on

the book of the Prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 [c] The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat

[c] Isaiah, chap. lxi, 1.

skins and rolled up. *And when he had opened*, literally "unrolled," *the book, he found the place where it was written;* a mode of expression which intimates that it was not the portion assigned to be read for the day. The sections or lessons of the law were, it would seem, read with great exactness; but in the prophets, the reader might read less than the portion appointed, or even turn to another place, if thought applicable. Here our Lord reads only a few verses, and those out of the order, and makes them the text of a discourse. Liberty of expounding and exhorting in the synagogues was allowed to qualified persons, and creditable strangers, by consent of the ruler; and when our Lord gave the signal of his wish to read, by standing up, he might include in it a desire to expound also; for having *closed the book*, and returned it to the minister, he *sat down*, as the manner of the Jewish doctors was, when they taught or preached, understanding that he had the consent of the president to comment upon the passage, as well as to read it. The passage he had selected from Isaiah, they all knew related to the Messiah, for in that their interpreters were universally agreed; and as he had already preached largely throughout Galilee, and spoken and acted in the character of Messiah, *the eyes of all them in the synagogue were fastened upon him*, in eager expectation as to what use he might make of the passage, or whether he would apply it to himself.

Verses 18, 19. *To the poor.*—In the Hebrew, it is *the meek*, but St. Luke follows the LXX. The words, however, come from the same root; and spiritual poverty, or lowliness and humility of mind is intended. Not, indeed, as Bishop Horsley well observes, that the figurative sense is to exclude the literal; "for the Christian revelation is emphatically glad tidings to the poor," as it opens to them without respect of persons the same glorious hopes as to the most exalted. Still even these must become "poor in spirit" before they can obtain the true riches. *The broken-hearted* are the contrite and penitent, who are truly *healed* by pardoning mercy, and the assurance of the remission of sins by the comforting testimony of the Holy Spirit. Persons oppressed also with great trouble of mind, arising from outward afflictions, are not excluded. With such, if they bring their case to Christ in prayer, he tenderly sympathizes, grants support and solace; and by the influences of his grace he turns the sorrows of life into the means of *healing* the soul. *To preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind*, is also to be understood figuratively of our redemption from the captivity of our spiritual enemies. Instead of *recovery of sight to the blind*, which is the reading of the LXX., the Hebrew is, *and freedom to those bound in prison;* which is but a repetition of the preceding clause. The LXX. probably followed a different reading; or, since it was not uncommon in the east to put out the eyes of prisoners, they took the repetition of the Hebrew to express captivity in its harshest forms, and so concluded the captives spoken of, like Samson, to have been deprived of sight, and put to mean and wasting labours. The deliverance of the demoniacs from the bondage of Satan, by our merciful Redeemer, and the opening the eyes of those actually deprived of natural sight, were fulfilments of this illustrious prophecy; but only in a primary and inferior sense, as these were visible TYPES, and most certain PLEDGES, of the power of the Saviour to rescue us from the greater calamities of spiritual thraldom, blindness, and degradation. The Chaldee paraphrase interprets the last clause thus, "To the prisoners, Be ye revealed to the light;" which in substance agrees with the LXX., since to be brought out of constant darkness may be said to be a *recovery of sight to the blind.* The allusion in this case will be not to the custom of putting out the eyes of prisoners, but to that of confining them in pits and dark dungeons. Hence the Messiah, in Isaiah xlix, 9, is appointed to "say to the PRISONERS, Go forth; to them that are in DARKNESS, Show yourselves." The next clause, *to set at liberty them that are bruised*, worn down and wounded by the weight of their chains, is still a heightened representation of the miserable condition of the captives. This clause is not, however, either in the present copies of the Hebrew or Septuagint. The same words occur in the LXX., Isaiah lviii, 6. *To preach*, proclaim, κηρυξαι, *the acceptable year of the Lord.* An *acceptable time* is a season in which God shows himself gracious and benign; and there is here an allu-

down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you,

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sion to the year of jubilee, when all debts were cancelled, inheritances restored, and freedom given to all Hebrew bondsmen. This interesting political institution, equally marked by wisdom and benevolence, and which, when once proclaimed by sound of trumpet, filled the whole land with joy and gladness, and was, to those especially who were to partake its benefits, an *acceptable* and most *grateful* time, was the type of the Gospel age of deliverance and restoration, and was therefore so used by the prophet, and quoted by our Lord. Our Lord began the proclamation of the commencement of this spiritual jubilee; and it is the delightful work of his servants still to publish it, and to offer the benefits of the day, the season of grace to all who will accept them,—the remission of the debt of sin, the restoration of the alienated inheritance of heaven, and spiritual freedom. Animated by the same fine thought, St. Paul exclaims, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," 2 Cor. vi, 2.

Verse 21. *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*—That is, in your *hearing;* as though he had said, I declare to you this day that it is fulfilled; which implied that the acceptable year spoken of by the prophet had arrived, and that he himself was the Messiah who was anointed to preach *the good tidings.* God's love to fallen man, the provision made by his mercy to remove those various spiritual miseries and dangers, so affectingly set forth in the text on which he was commenting, opened in the clearest and sweetest eloquence, and enforced no doubt with many kind exhortations and invitations, formed the subjects of this discourse; which appears to have been of considerable length, and it produced great, though not saving effect. And *they all bare him witness,* gave signs of approbation, *and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,* that is, at the wisdom and elegance of his speech, at the attractive manner in which he had set forth all these benefits, and the clearness and power of argument with which he gave weight to the whole. *And they said, is not this Joseph's son?* The first effect appears to have been surprise, that a man who had not been brought up in the schools, could discourse so admirably; which ought to have convinced them, in conjunction with the mighty works which they knew he had already wrought in Galilee, that his claim to be the Messiah at least deserved to be candidly considered, seeing he was equally "mighty in deed and word." But the effect upon an "evil heart of unbelief" was the reverse: they wondered at the wisdom and excellence of what he said, because he was Joseph's son; but they argued that because he was so, because he was not great by birth; and trained up under their wise men, he could not be the Messiah.—This was the conclusion to which they came after their wonder at his discourse had somewhat abated; and it was with reference to this state of their minds that the following words of our Lord are to be interpreted.—Without taking it into account that they had fully made up their minds to reject his claim, notwithstanding the impression made by his discourse, and that because of the lowly condition in which he had always lived among them, Christ's subsequent address to them appears inexplicably harsh, and quite different from his usual manner. But when the people of Nazareth are viewed as already having made up their minds to reject Christ, and to resist even the convictions which had stolen upon them during the delivery of this discourse, and that under the influence of a base and worldly prejudice, we shall see in the whole an instance of that solemn judicial abandonment which even Christ shall at length inflict upon all who wilfully reject his truth.

Verses 23–30. *Physician, heal thyself.*—Our Lord's manner was often to anticipate objections, and to refute them while yet they were working in the minds of his adversaries, and before they had declared them.—This showed his perfect knowledge of the heart. That objection by which the people of Nazareth appeared to have fortified themselves against acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah was, that he had not wrought the same, or so great works at Nazareth as in other places; for instance, at Capernaum, a city where he had much resided after he had commenced his ministry, and where he raised Jairus' daughter from death, healed the man with a withered hand, the woman with the issue of blood, and done other great miracles. Of these things they had heard; which shows that this visit of our Lord to Nazareth

No [d] prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, [e] many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 [f] And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the * brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a

[d] Matt. xiii, 57.—[e] 1 Kings xvii, 9.—[f] 2 Kings v, 14.

* Or, *edge.*

was not at the commencement, but at a late period of his public ministry; for Luke's plan, as it has already been observed, was not so strictly to observe the order of time in his narrative as the classes of events, and their illustrative character. The *proverb* our Lord quotes is called in the Greek *a parable*, because proverbs of this class contain a simile or comparison, and were indeed often the moral of well known parables in the proper sense. It is a common proverb, implying reproof in all nations, and has various applications. Here the point of it was, that Christ took more care of strangers than of his own townspeople and kindred; that he was liberal of his favours from home. Our Lord's answer shows that this was but a pretence for not receiving him in his true character. They ought indeed to have been satisfied with smaller evidence of his claims than strangers, since he had lived so many years among them, and had established his character for wisdom and piety; but to their proverb our Lord opposes another, *No prophet is accepted in his own country*, or, as it is given by St. Mark, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house;" a truth which often derives illustration from fact. For, as public teachers, they may be objects of envy to some, who have known them in a private condition; and as faithful reprovers usually offend, the reproved are ready to seize upon any circumstance of meanness, in their former condition; or any thing connected with their family relations, by which the prophet or teacher is held up to contempt, and the point of his reproofs blunted. See the notes on Matt. xiii, 57. But our Lord has another reason to give for his not having done as many miracles there as at Capernaum and other places. These works were not to be performed out of natural affection, or love of kindred or country, in those who were endowed with the power of working them, but were under the special command and sovereign authority of God, who takes into account the state of men's hearts, and their improvement of one privilege before he bestows another; and often too overlooks those who fancy they have most claim to his regard, to bestow his blessings upon strangers and despised persons. So Elijah was sent during the great famine, to be the inmate of the widow of Sarepta, a Sidonian city, and therefore herself a Gentile, although there were many widows in Israel. And Naaman, the Syrian leper, was cleansed by Elisha, although there were many lepers in Israel. He thus plainly declared to them that because of their worldliness and disposition to unbelief they were less regarded by God than others among whom he had been specially sent to perform his mightier works; and not obscurely intimated that the doctrine and salvation they put away from them should be sent to the Gentiles. They were therefore *filled with wrath*; and pleading probably what the bigoted zealots among them called the judgment of zeal,—the lawfulness of avenging the cause of their religion when they thought any dishonour put upon it, in a tumultuous manner, without waiting for the regular forms of trial,—they hurried him to *the brow of the hill*, that they might cast him down the precipice: but *he passed through the midst*, not by making himself invisible, as some have thought, but by a miraculous restraint which he suddenly laid upon them; and so showing them their weakness and his power, *went his way*.—Thus he performed among them one mighty work which he had not done at Capernaum, the place they pretended to envy; but it was a miracle which did not bring their Saviour near to them, but separated him from them for ever; which will be the effect also of the last act of power our Lord will perform, as to all those who wilfully reject him, in whatever age they have lived, and in whatever country they may be found. On the situation of Nazareth Dr. E. D. Clarke remarks: "Induced by the words of the Gospel to examine the place attentively, we went, as it is written, out of the city to the brow of the hill on which the city is built, and came to a precipice corresponding with the words of the evangelist." The topographical accu-

city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: [g] for his word was with power.

33 ¶ [h] And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying * Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ [i] And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 [k] And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking *them* suffered them not † to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent.

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

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[g] Matt. vii, 29.—[h] Mark i, 23.—* Or, *away.*
[i] Matt. viii, 14.

[k] Mark i, 34.—† Or, *to say that they knew him to be Christ.*

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racy of the writers of the gospels is indeed so great as to make their writings a guide to travellers to this day, and furnishes a most convincing proof that the gospels were written by Jews and eye witnesses, or contain their relations.

Verse 32. *For his word was with power.*—This was on many occasions, and in various places, felt by his auditors, and acknowledged. See the note on Matt. vii, 28, 29. Not only did his word make a powerful impression, but it carried with it a dignity and authority indicating a Being superior to mere human teachers though prophets. This mystery was not indeed, at that time, so fully revealed, as afterward; but there was an impression of it, though indistinct and indefinite, made upon the minds of the thousands in Galilee, who heard him with reverence and attention, in their synagogues, from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Verses 33–37. *The spirit of an unclean devil, &c.*—See the notes on Mark i, 23, &c.

Verse 38. *Simon's wife's mother.*—See notes on Matt. viii, 14, 15.

Verse 40. *When the sun was setting, &c.*—Δυνοντος δε ηλιου, the present for the past, when the sun had set, which concluded the Sabbath; and for that they had been waiting, that, as soon as it was lawful, they might bring forth their sick to be healed. See the note on Matt. viii, 16.

Verse 42. *And came unto him, and stayed him.*—What eagerness on the part of the people of Galilee to hear our Lord, and to keep him among them, does the conclusion of this chapter with the first verse of the next exhibit! When he retired to the desert, *they sought him out*, they *urged him*, endeavoured to restrain him by kind entreaties *that he should not depart from them*, and *pressed upon him to hear the word of God.* Yet "the leaven of the Pharisees" afterward came in to destroy all this prospect of good. They neither "entered the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffered those that would to enter in;" and partly by turning into contempt a Messiah who did not even profess it to be his design to exalt the nation to power and dominion,—an objection to our Lord which the carnal ambition of the Jews greatly favoured,—and then by blunting the force of the evidence of his mission from miracles, among those not disposed to be convinced, by furnishing them with the diabolical sophism, that he cast out devils by the prince of devils, they succeeded, to a great extent, in destroying the effect both of the Baptist's and of

our Lord's earliest ministry. Still great numbers were prepared for the Lord, who were afterward gathered into the Christian Church, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles; and numbers more, no doubt, of whom we have no record.

CHAPTER V.

1 Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship: 4 in a miraculous taking of fishes, showeth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men: 12 cleanseth the leper: 16 prayeth in the wilderness: 18 healeth one sick of the palsy: 27 calleth Matthew the publican: 29 eateth with sinners, as being the physician of souls: 34 foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension: 36 and likeneth faint-hearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.

1 AND [a] it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

[a] St. Matthew, chap. iv, 18.

CHAPTER V. Verse 2. *Two ships, &c.*—Two fishing vessels, either at anchor near the shore or aground. From these the fishermen had *gone out, and were washing their nets*, after an unsuccessful night's toil. One of the vessels belonged to Simon and Andrew, the other to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who are called "partners with Simon." From Simon's vessel, our Lord, being *pressed* on shore by the eager crowd, addressed a discourse to the multitude, who had followed him; and then directed Simon, Andrew also being with him, to launch forth into deep water, *and let down their nets for a draught.* We observe, 1. That Simon's objection, *We have toiled all the night and have taken nothing*, renders the subsequent miracle more unequivocal and illustrious, inasmuch as it shows that the fish did not then abound in that part of the sea, or kept themselves close in their haunts. 2. That Simon's letting down the net was an act of obedient faith: *Nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.* 3. That the abundance marked by the *net breaking*, or rather, being on the point of breaking, and by the draught so filling both the vessels that they were ready to sink, or in danger of sinking, was an additional proof of the miraculous character of the event; for the very impression made upon Peter, who felt himself as in the presence of Deity, and said, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, proves that no ordinary event had happened, and that the draught was unparalleled and preternatural: nor was he only *astonished, but all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.* They were seized with astonishment and awe, as the words signify. 4. The whole was symbolical; a mode of teaching by significant action; and when our Lord said to Simon, and through him to the other disciples, for such they already were, (see the note on Matt. iv, 18,) *Fear not, for from henceforth thou shalt catch men*, they understood its import. This they declared by *forsaking all and following him, when they had brought their vessels to land:* they knew that Christ now called them to the sacred office of instructing others in the way of salvation; and they gave up all to follow him, so that they might be trained up for it. Their occupation was indeed to be in the great waters of the world; their business to *catch men;* that is, to make disciples of Christ; and their success was not only to be great but miraculous, and to be owing to the same Divine power working in the depths of the human heart which had wrought in the depths of the sea, and brought the fish into the net of the apostles. These great lessons were indeed afterward more clearly comprehended; but even then the apostles felt their general impression; and under the command of Him who had appeared before them as arrayed with omnipotent power, controlling all nature, they finally went to their great enterprise, in faith and hope, *launched out into the deep*, and at the bidding of their Master, *let down their net.* With what success the history of the world is witness.

Verse 4. *Launch out, &c.*—Επαναγαγε a nautical term, which signifies to put off from shore.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

12 ¶ [b] And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 ¶ And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

18 ¶ [c] And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by

[b] Matt. viii, 2.

[c] Matt. ix, 2.

Verse 5. *Master we have toiled, &c.*—That Simon and the others were already disciples, though now for the first time in immediate attendance upon Christ, is indicated by the mode of address, επιστατα, master, teacher, equivalent to rabbi.

Verse 8. *Depart from me, &c.*—The attitude of Peter, prostrate before the feet of Christ, and his words, imply that he had at the moment as full an impression of Christ's Divinity, as Isaiah when he saw the glory of the Lord of hosts in the temple, and exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips." The nearness of the Divine presence, realized, so to speak, either in vision or thought, uniformly brings man's sinful character to his remembrance, and makes him feel that he cannot stand acquitted before infinite justice and purity. The impression is always one of guilty dread, till we are taught that there is "a new and living way" by which we may draw near to God, and God draw near to us, without danger. That way is the atonement of Christ; and we are conducted along it to the mercy seat by the hand of faith. To make Peter in these words to desire Christ merely to „ go out of his ship," is a cold and powerless comment on a phrase which obviously carries with it a force far beyond the mere literal meaning.

Verse 10. *Catch men.*—Several have shown that both Hebrew and Greek writers use terms taken from hunting and fishing, to signify the influence exerted by some on others, so as to attach them to their opinion or party. To catch men was to bring men to believe in Christ, to embrace his party, his people, in opposition to the world. The stress laid by some on the etymology of the word, which is, *to catch alive* in order to preserve, is fanciful. It is employed generally as a term of hunting or fishing.

Verse 12. *A man full of leprosy.*—See the notes on Matt. viii, 1, 2, &c.

Verse 17. *And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*—Not *the Pharisees and doctors* just mentioned, for they were there only as objectors and calumniators, as appears in the following verses; but the sick persons of the place, Capernaum, where we learn from Mark he then was. Pronouns often refer to the remoter noun. *The power of the Lord* is the power of Christ; so that the evangelist evidently regarded the miraculous power of Christ as inherent IN HIMSELF, which is the grand distinction between him, and the most highly endowed of his servants. *To be pre-*

what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

27 ¶ [d] And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast

[d] St. Matthew, chap. ix, 9.

sent to heal, is a mode of expressing the present exercise of power. That wondrous virtue which he possessed he exerted in healing many sick persons on that occasion.

Verses 18–25. *A man taken with the palsy.*—See the notes on Matt. ix, 2, &c., and Mark ii, 4, &c.

Verse 26. *We have seen strange things.*—Παραδοξα, literally, *things beyond all thought*, παρα την δοξην, and therefore wonderful. Cicero renders παραδοξα by *admirabilia*. The remark refers to the whole series of miracles, principally, perhaps, to the healing of the paralytic, who had been brought upon a couch by four men, and by Christ's simple word had been enabled to take up that couch and walk home. They had heard too his sins pronounced forgiven by the same Being that had healed him.—One of the strange things, therefore, they had seen, was the departure of a sinner publicly forgiven from the presence of Him who claimed the right and power to forgive sin, and who proved it by a miracle. That indeed was to them the strangest, and probably the most inexplicable, of the *strange things* they had that day seen.

Verse 27. *A publican sitting at the receipt, &c.*—See the notes on Matthew ix, 9–17.

Verses 28, 29. *Left all, &c.*—He left his profitable occupation, and the gains of the remaining part of the year; for if he was one of those publicans who farmed a portion of the imposts by the year, he would have paid in advance. This is the more probable, as it accounts for his speedy departure from his occupation. Had he been a government servant hired at a salary, like our custom house officers, to collect the duties, he must in justice have remained until a successor had been appointed; but having himself purchased the tolls and dues for a given period, he was at liberty to throw up the office of exacting them at pleasure. This circumstance also, with that of his making a *great feast* on occasion of his being called to be an apostle, shows that Matthew was a man of respectable rank. The feast, δοχην, according to the Hebrew משתה, was of that kind which only people of some wealth could give, and at which the guests were numerous. Often indeed have great feasts been made upon the acquisition of wealth and honour: this was the first, and perhaps the only one, ever designedly made in celebration of the renunciation of both, and which expressed the joy of the host at the prospect of becoming the poor disciple of him who had not "where to lay his head." Surely there must have been a strong and pure principle of faith and love in the breasts of these early disciples who forsook their all, whether fishing boats and nets or the publican's booth, to follow a Master who held out no worldly inducements. For though it may be said that they might expect that his kingdom was outward and political as well as spiritual, and that he would at length raise both himself and them to honour, (and that they did indulge this anticipation is evident,) yet still there was THAT wrought in their hearts which took a deep hold of their affections, and planted itself in their conscience, which was far above worldly hopes; and by it they were enabled to pass through all those trials of their faith to which it was in wisdom subjected, that it might be at last crowned with the resistless demonstration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Matthew is called Levi by St. Luke; which has given rise to some controversy as to

in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 ¶ [e] And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

[e] St. Matthew, chap. ix, 14.

whether two apostles are not meant. The similarity of the circumstances, however, indisputably proves that two transactions cannot have been intended; and it was sufficiently common for the Jews to have two names, and to be called indifferently by either or by both; as Simon and Peter, and Simon Peter.

Verse 30. *Their scribes and Pharisees murmured, &c.*—See notes on Matthew ix, 11–17. Some MSS. and versions leave out *αυτων*; but if it be retained, the scribes and Pharisees of Capernaum may be those particularly alluded to.

Verse 36. *Then both the new maketh a rent.*—These two last clauses of the verse must be read in a reversed order, to make the sense conspicuous, *If otherwise, the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old, and* (what is worse) *the new maketh a rent.*

Verse 37. *New wine into new bottles.*—See the notes on Matt. ix, 17.

Verse 39. *No man also, having drunk old wine, &c.*—He refuses the *new wine*, which is harsh in its taste, and prefers the *old*, which is *χρηστοτερος*, *better*, because *mellower* and more *generous*. The superiority of old to new wine forms the basis of various proverbs and allusions among ancient writers. Our Lord's meaning is generally understood to be, that it is difficult suddenly to change old habits, and therefore his disciples must be trained up gradually to austerities which were practised by the disciples of John and the Pharisees. But he did not enjoin these austerities upon his disciples afterward, and could not, therefore, intend gradually to train them to practise them.—Nor can the interpretation of Wolfius, who applies the words to the Pharisees, as intimating that they were too much attached to their old traditions to relish Christ's new doctrine, be maintained, because our Lord's words clearly imply, on his part, a justification of the choice of old wine to new. The true import appears to be, that our Lord tacitly affirms that his DISCIPLINE was as much more pleasant to a spiritual taste, such as he had excited in a good degree in his disciples by his teaching, and as much more salutary in comparison with the discipline of the Pharisees and that practised by the disciples of John, as *old wine* was more grateful and wholesome than *new;* and so his disciples, having proved the excellence of the rule and spirit of his religion, were not likely to measure their steps back to the ordinances of inferior dispensations. There is also, probably, in the words a reproof of the austerities in question, as NOVELTIES in religion, and therefore to be compared to *new wine*. Those of the Pharisees were certainly of human invention, and so probably were those fasts of the disciples of John, rules devised and practised after their master had been cast into prison; for in his preaching he appears not to have enjoined them.—But freedom from superstitious rigidity had been the character of true religion in all ages; and our Lord therefore compares his rule of discipline, as being conformed to that which had a Divine authority from the beginning, to *old wine*, and declares it *better*. No inventions of men can compare with the simple institutions of God. Old wine with the Jews was wine of the age of three years.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the Sabbath, by Scripture, reason, and miracle: 13 chooseth twelve apostles: 17 healeth the diseased: 20 preacheth to his disciples before the people of blessings and curses: 27 how we must love our enemies: 46 and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word: lest in the evil day of temptation we fall like a house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.

1 And [a] it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was a hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

6 [b] And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught; and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy *it?*

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 ¶ And when it was day, he called

[a] Matt. xii, 1.

[b] Matt. xii, 9.

CHAPTER VI. Verse 1. *On the second Sabbath after the first.*—On this phrase, εν σαββατω δευτεροπρωτω, says Simon, there are eight different explications, and all conjectural; and even the Syriac and Arabic versions, though so much nearer in time and place to Palestine, show plainly, that their authors did not understand it. Happily nothing depends upon it; and it only adds another proof that this gospel was written, as it professes, by one intimately familiar with Jewish customs and modes of expression.—That most generally received, is sanctioned by Scaliger, Lightfoot, Whitby, Lamy, and others. On the second day of unleavened bread, or of the passover week, Lev. xxiii, 10, 16, took place the offering of the sheaf or first fruits of the harvest. Thence they reckoned fifty days to the pentecost. The δευτερο-πρωτον, or *second-first Sabbath*, is the first Sabbath after this second day of unleavened bread. The second Sabbath would be called δευτερο-δευτερον the third, δευτερο-τριτον; but of this, no instances can be quoted, or this view of the matter would be established. This view is originally drawn from Theophylact, who explains the Sabbath in question as the first of the seven Sabbaths between the passover and the pentecost. This is supported by the season of the year; for when our Lord went through the corn fields, the corn was standing ripe, or nearly so, in the fields. On this transaction, see the notes on Matt. xii, 1, &c.

Verse 6. *A man whose right hand was withered.* See notes on Matt. xii, 9–14.

Verse 7. *That they might find an accusation,* κατηγοριαν, the matter of an accusation, against him so as to proceed against him judicially, and arraign him before the council of twenty-three, as a Sabbath-breaker. See notes on Matt. xii, 14.

Verse 12. *In prayer to God.*—Προσευχη του Θεου, here, is taken by some for one of the *proseuchæ*, or places of prayer, which they think distinct from the synagogues, and more ancient, and in which men prayed not together but apart. That proseuchæ was but another name for synagogue appears, however, most probable; but however this may be, there is no reason for departing here from the common interpretation, that our Lord on this, as on many other occasions, spent the night in the open air alone, in

unto him his disciples: [c] and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles:

14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James, the *son* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas [d] *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, [e] Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 [f] But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25 [g] Wo unto you that are full! for

[c] Matt. x, 1.—[d] Jude 1.

[e] Matt. v, 3.—[f] Amos vi, 1.—[g] Isaiah lxv, 13.

meditation and prayer. In order to ensure more absolute solitude, he seems to have generally chosen a mountain for these special exercises. The genitive case, after προσευχη, is a genitive of the object, and has the force of προς, with an accusative: he *continued all night in prayer* TO GOD. It is not improbable that our Lord spent this night in prayer preparatory to the solemn business of choosing the twelve apostles, which he did the next day.

Verse 13. *And of them he chose twelve.*—See the notes on Matt. x, 1, &c.

Verse 17. *And stood in the plain.*—Those who think that St. Luke, in what follows, has given an abridgment of the sermon on the mount, reconcile this account of our Lord's having delivered it *in the plain* with that of St. Matthew, who says that it was delivered from the *mountain*, by supposing that the *plain* spoken of was an elevated table land, on the declivity of the mountain, where his audience might conveniently stand. This presents no material difficulty; but there are reasons on the other side of greater weight: the sermon on the mount was not delivered after the choosing of the twelve apostles, but the calling of the four at the sea of Tiberias; and St. Luke has united with passages from the sermon on the mount, several others which were not delivered at that time, but on various occasions. Notwithstanding, therefore, the objection that this discourse has the same exordium and the same peroration as in Matthew's version of it, and that by both evangelists Christ is represented as having returned to Capernaum, after having delivered it, it cannot be the same discourse preached on the same occasion. It contains many of the same passages of Divine wisdom and eloquence, which, however, only shows that our Lord sometimes chose to deliver the same truths in the same or nearly similar words, and that in discourses of considerable length; and it is confirmatory of this, that St. Luke himself, who has nowhere, like St. Matthew, recorded the sermon on the mount at full length, has preserved the account of another portion of the same sermon, as having been spoken by Christ on an entirely different occasion. See chapter xii, 22, &c. Parts of this sermon were therefore at other times repeated, with some variations.

Verse 20. *Blessed be ye poor, &c.*—See notes on Matt. v, 1, &c.

Verse 22. *When they shall separate you from their company.*—Οταν αφορισωσιν υμας, when they *shall excommunicate you*, or cast you out of their synagogues.

Verse 24. *Wo unto you that are rich.*—Not as rich, but rich men living in the spirit and after the example of the world. He alludes immediately to the opulent, proud, and luxurious Pharisees and Sadducees; yet against all rich men, in all ages, who forget God, this terrible *wo* lies,—that in this world *they have received their consolation*, and no felicity awaits them in another.—Campbell has a note to caution us against considering these *woes* uttered by our Lord as imprecations. Perhaps in that he is right; but when he says, that "if we regard them as authoritative denunciations of judgments, this is the same thing." he forgets

ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 ¶ [h] But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 [i] And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; [k] and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to *take thy* coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 [l] And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 [m] For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 [n] And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 [o] Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

[h] Matt. v, 44.—[i] Matt. v, 39.—[k] 1 Cor. vi, 7.—[l] Matt. vii, 12; Tobit iv, 16.—[m] Matt. v, 46.

[n] Matt. v, 42.—[o] Matt. vii, 1.

our Lord's character as a judge. A judge may pronounce a sentence without uttering an imprecation; and though he alleges that the office of judge is a part of that glory to which he was afterward raised, this only refers to the actual exercise of judgment upon persons. The authoritative denunciation of punishment against classes of persons or characters, the connection of certain penalties with certain offences, are both judicial; and these he frequently announced in the time of his humility: so that these *woes* are not mere declarations of consequences, or warnings, which any teacher as well as our Lord himself might use: with him they assumed a higher and more solemn character.

Verse 26. *When all men speak well of you.*—There is no more reason to suppose that these words were spoken to the apostles, by way of hypothetic caution, than that the woes in the preceding verses were addressed to them. The Jewish priests and doctors are the persons still intended.—They were universally popular; all men spake well of them; they were "of the world," and the world in them "loved its own;" but this, says our Lord, only proved them to be deceivers, *for so did their fathers to the false prophets.* In a wicked age, only those who prophesy smooth things can be popular.

Verse 27. *Love your enemies, &c.*—See note on Matt. v, 44. No man, says one justly, had ever lived who would have invented this precept. The strongest passions of the heart oppose it, the most inveterate prejudices of all nations and all climates disavow and contradict it. We may regard it as an absolute certainty, therefore, that the invention of man would never have produced this precept; and less perhaps than any other a Jew, by whom hatred of some descriptions of enemies was supposed to be a principle of duty.

Verses 29–38. See the notes on the sermon on the mount in Matthew. There are, however, a few variations in expression, which may here be noticed.

Verse 32. *What thank have ye?*—Χαρις here includes the *μισθος, reward*, as mentioned in the parallel places of Matthew.—What praiseworthy act do you perform, and what reward shall you receive?

Verse 34. *If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive.*—Either the interest of money lent, and then this is a traffic in money, and no favour; or under stipulation of some equivalent return in any other way. In either case the beneficent character of the act is destroyed. It ceases to be a religious act: it implies no true charity to men; no faith in God's providence; no implicit subjection to his commands. It is therefore enjoined to lend, *hoping for nothing again;* not including the sum lent, for that would destroy the difference between lending and giving; but without hope of earthly advantage, that so it might be a generous and self-denying act.

Verse 36. *Be ye therefore merciful.*—In the parallel place in Matthew it is "perfect." And by both we are taught that our perfection consists in love. The mercifulness here spoken of is not only pity to the miserable, but benignity to all; and, as it is used by the Hebrews, implied the exercise of every kind of beneficence. The root of this is unfeigned charity; and the true love of our neighbour, according to the intention

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, [p] Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 [q] The disciple is not above his Master: but every one * that is perfect shall be as his Master.

41 [r] And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 [s] For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 ¶ [t] And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

[p] Matt. xv, 14.—[q] Matt. x, 24.—* Or, *shall be perfected as his Master.*—[r] Matt. vii, 3.

[s] Matt. vii, 16.—[t] Matt. vii, 21.

of the law, can only spring from the true love of God, that is, loving him supremely and habitually with all the powers of the soul. This is our perfection in its ROOT and FRUIT.

Verse 38. *Good measure, &c.*—Sometimes *good* or *equal* measure with that ye have meted; but often more, even *pressed down* or *shaken together*, according to the nature of the substances, the measure being made to hold more of one thing by *pressing down*, of another by shaking together: and *running over;* so that all the terms intimate a liberal return whether of good for good, or of evil for evil. The phrase, into your bosom, εις τον κολπον, refers to the use made of the folds of their long robes to carry dry articles, as corn or fruits.

Verse 39. *Can the blind, &c.*—See the note on Matt. xv, 14.

Verse 40. *The disciple is not above his Master, &c.*—As the preceding parable appears to have no connection with what goes before, so this remark seems to stand wholly disconnected with the parable. These are golden sayings of our Lord, a sort of text on which no doubt he enlarged in the discourse. To be *perfect*, in a disciple of Christ, is to be fully instructed in his Lord's doctrine, and in spirit and temper fully conformed to it, or what he himself, in another place, calls being "sanctified by the truth." That our Lord is here speaking of his own disciples, is clear from his saying the disciple is not above his Master, meaning that it cannot be, it is a thing impossible; which would not be true of the disciples of a human master, for by them he might be excelled, however excellent. No disciple of Christ can, however, rise above his Master, who is introduced apparently for the express purpose of impressing us the more forcibly with the height of our POSSIBLE attainments through the grace of God; *for every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.* Καταρτιζειν *is to compact or knit together*, hence to make ready, to perfect; and, applied to teaching, fully to instruct. Every *fully instructed* disciple therefore shall be *as his Master;* in other words, the end of our discipleship is to be made like Christ; and this shall be the glorious result, if we continue to follow him. "The mind that was in Christ" shall be in us; and it is only as we advance in this state of conformity to our Saviour that we approve ourselves as his true disciples. For as every perfectly *instructed* or *prepared* disciple thinks, wills, and acts in the same manner as his Master, so are we to THINK, WILL, and ACT like Christ.

Verse 41. *The mote that is in thy brother's eye.*—See the note on Matt. vii, 3.

Verses 43, 44. *A good tree, &c.*—See notes on Matt. vii, 16–18.

Verse 45. *A good man out of the good treasure, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xii, 34, 35.

Verse 46. *Lord, Lord.*—See notes on Matt. vii, 21–23.

Verses 47–49. *To whom he is like, &c.*—See notes on Matt. vii, 24–27.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion, a Gentile, than in any of the Jews:* 10 *healeth his servant being absent:* 11 *raiseth from death the widow's son of Nain:* 19 *answereth John's messengers with the declaration of his miracles:* 24 *testifieth to the people what opinion he held of John:* 30 *inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won:* 36 *and showeth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their faith and repentance.*

1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, [a] he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day

[a] St. Matthew, chap. viii, 5.

CHAPTER VII. Verse 2. *A certain centurion's servant.*—As the preceding discourse of our Lord, though in part composed of passages in the sermon on the mount, appears to have been delivered at a different time and occasion, some have thought this account of the healing of the centurion's servant a different history from the very similar one recorded in Matthew, chap. viii. But the strong agreement of the circumstances and the speeches almost irresistibly demonstrate it to be the same miracle. Nor is there any necessity for connecting it with the preceding discourse. The first verse of this chapter may be considered as the conclusion of the narrative in which the discourse is introduced; and so this account of the centurion, as well as that of the following miracle, will be quite distinct, and in St. Luke's manner, brought in without respect to the order of their occurrence. See the notes on this miracle, Matt. viii, 5, &c. St. Luke introduces the additional circumstance of *the elders of the Jews* interceding with Christ on his behalf. In St. Matthew, the centurion himself is said to come. He came by proxy; and according to the Jewish saying, "every man's proxy is as himself:" and in the Scriptures it is customary to make messengers speak as in the very words of those who send them. So James and John speak by their mother, Mark x, 35; Matt. xx, 20. And Abigail answers the messengers of David as if he were present himself, 1 Sam. xxv, 40, 41.

Verse 4. *That he was worthy.*—They did not necessarily mean that he deserved the favour; but that being a pious worshipper of the true God, a lover of the nation as having the knowledge of the true God among them,—the only ground on which a Roman could love a people generally despised by his countrymen,—and one who had given proof both of his zeal and liberality, by building a synagogue at his own expense, he was a fit person to be favourably noticed; or there was great fitness in marking out such a man as

after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the *bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

18 [b] And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.

19 ¶ And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in the same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those

* Or, *coffin.*

[b] Matt. xi, 2.

a special object of regard; and our Lord allowed the force of the plea by going down immediately with them.

Verses 11–16. *A city called Nain.*—This city is fixed, both by Jerome and Eusebius, in Lower Galilee, about a mile south of Mount Tabor. This great and affecting miracle presents itself, in the account of St. Luke, under many interesting views. It was a very public one; for beside the persons attending the funeral, *the disciples* of Christ *were with him, and much people.* He was entering the gate of the city while the corpse was carried out to the place of burial without the walls; so that apparently it depended upon the mere accident of meeting it at the moment whether the dead should be raised to life, and the broken-hearted mother comforted. But with God there are no chances; and apparent accidents only the more strongly mark his interposition. The deceased was *the only son of his mother*, and that mother *a widow*, —a circumstance which appears to have excited great commiseration in the place; *for much people of the city was with her.* Our Lord was touched with the circumstance; and at the sight of the distressed widow, *he had compassion on her:* she appeared before him bereaved and childless, her quiver empty, and to use the expression of the Jews, the last coal on her hearth extinguished, having now no help or refuge in man; but "a very present help in trouble" was near, and he said unto her, *Weep not.* The whole manner of the miracle is overwhelming. He lays his hand upon the *bier*,—the funeral couch in which the dead were carried forth, without coffin,—arrests the march of the bearers, utters the words of power and authority at which death retires and life returns. *Young man,* I SAY UNTO THEE, *Arise; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother.* In how few sentences is this stupendous occurrence narrated! leaving the mind to dwell upon it without any interruption from the remarks of the narrator, and to fall under the influence of that *fear* which *came upon all.*

Verses 18–22. *And the disciples of John, &c.*—On the visit of John's disciples to Christ, see the notes on Matt. xi, 2–12. From St. Luke we learn that our Lord *in the*

that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers * rejected the counsel of God † against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, [c] Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

36 ¶ [d] And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind *him*

* Or, *frustrated*.—† Or, *within themselves*.

[c] Matt. xi, 16.—[d] Mark xiv, 3.

same hour, while these disciples were with him, cured many of *infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight*; which circumstance gives great force to the words which follow, *Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, &c.*

Verse 29. *All the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.*—From this it appears that a vast body of the people of Galilee must have been baptized by John, since the whole of this promiscuous multitude now assembled to hear Christ are said to have received his baptism. *The publicans* are again mentioned; from which it may be inferred that John's ministry had been eminently successful among that class of Jews, who were greatly despised because of their profession. They *justified* God; which cannot be taken, as by Grotius and Beza, in the sense of giving thanks to and praising God. It expresses the sentiment of those who believed in the authority of John's mission, in opposition to the Pharisees, who *rejected it*. In echoing back the eulogies pronounced upon John by our Lord, they therefore vindicated his mission from the reproach and slight put upon it by the Pharisees, and acknowledged the Divine wisdom and goodness of its appointment.

Verse 30. *Rejected the counsel of God against themselves.*—Την βουλην, here is the *purpose* of God in the mission of John; his gracious design to bring men to repentance, and place them in a state of preparation to receive the Messiah, and all the spiritual blessings which he was appointed to impart; and as this was the design as to men in general, so to them who rejected it. Hence εις εαυτους is to be understood *toward*, or *in respect of themselves*, and so be connected with the *counsel* or purpose *of God*. But if εις be interpreted *against*, as in our translation, the sense is not substantially different; for unless *the counsel* or purpose of God had respect to their benefit, their rejection could not have been an injury to them in the way of *consequence*, as here represented.

Verse 31. *Whereunto shall I liken, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xi, 16.

Verse 36. *One of the Pharisees desired that he would eat with him.*—He publicly invited him to dinner, and appears also to have invited many persons to meet him. With what intent this was done does not clearly appear, except that he was far from treating our Lord with the usual marks of courteous attention shown to guests, and therefore, probably he had either a captious or a curious design. Our Lord did not decline this invitation, either that he might not give occasion to the Pharisees to take any advantage of his refusal, as though he was gloomy and morose, or that he might teach those important lessons which the circumstances of the occasion called forth.

Verse 37. *A woman in the city which was a sinner.*—Because Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed our Lord's feet, in the house of Simon the leper, at Bethany, some have confounded this woman with her, and others with Mary Magdalene, because she is here called *a sinner*, that is, one who had offended against the laws of chastity. But it is equally unjust to the two respectable women, Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala, to suppose that either of them had been *sinners* in this sense. The demoniacal possession of the latter appears to have been her affliction, not her crime; and that the character of the whole family which "Jesus loved," at Bethany, stood high among the respectable classes of Jews at Jerusalem, appears from

weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred * pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not

* See Matthew, chap. xviii, 28.

the number of them who came to condole with them upon the death of Lazarus. Besides, this woman was a resident *in the city*, not like Mary, sister of Lazarus, the inhabitant of a village; and *the city* appears to have been Nain, where our Lord had recently performed the miracle; whereas, the other Mary resided at Magdala: and had it been the latter, there seems no reason why her name should not have been mentioned here, as well as on other occasions, by the evangelist. Whoever this woman was, we hear no more of her. She found mercy, she showed her grateful affection to her Saviour, she received his approbation for that act of gratitude publicly manifested; but he appears to have dismissed her into privacy, and not to have given a woman who had been a *sinner*, *impudica*, a leading place among his female disciples. All the affinity in this account, and that of the anointing of our Lord at Bethany, lies, in fact, in the mention in each of a box or vase of alabaster, and in the act of anointing; but the first was a common name for all vessels containing unguents or scents; and anointing at feasts was a customary act.

Verse 38. *And stood at his feet, &c.*—The whole picture is beautifully drawn. As our Lord was reclining in the Jewish manner upon the couch at table, his feet would be stretched out behind with sandals off. Hence the woman is said to have *stood at his feet behind*. She was *weeping*, having been probably touched by his discourses on some occasion, and brought into a state of true penitence. The washing of the feet with tears, wiping them with the hair of the head, kissing them, and anointing them, were all marks of the profoundest veneration. Washing the feet always preceded anointing. To this day among the Arabs, when the master of the family has welcomed a stranger, he washes his feet.

Verse 39. *He spake within himself.*—He reasoned in his own mind, but said nothing; and our Lord gave another proof of his omniscience, by adapting his discourse to the train of thought and the suspicions into which his host had fallen. He had the commonly received notion that a true prophet, and especially the Messiah, would know exactly the character of those who approached them; and concluded certainly, from Christ suffering this woman to touch him, that he was ignorant of her character, and wanted therefore that power to "discern spirits" which the Messiah would undoubtedly possess. The Jewish commentators interpret that passage of Isaiah respecting the Messiah, "He shall be of quick understanding; he shall know at once who is a wicked person, and who is not."

Verse 41. *Five hundred pence.*—Five hundred *denarii* or Roman pence, each about sevenpence halfpenny of our money.

Verse 44. *Thou gavest me no water for my feet.*—The Pharisee is here gracefully reproved by the commendations bestowed upon the woman for his want of courtesy.—To guests at least who were received with peculiar joy and affection, it was customary to furnish water for the feet, to give the kiss of welcome, and to anoint the head. As Simon had done none of these to our Lord, he showed that he regarded him only as an indifferent person; at least these neglects proved that he *loved little*: while the attentions paid to him by the woman,—not only washing his feet, but doing it with tears; not wiping them with a towel, but with her hair; kissing even the feet and anointing them, as not presuming to anoint his head,—proved that *she loved much*. Much had been forgiven her. She was not only a penitent, but a forgiven penitent. The words of Christ which she had heard on some former

anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

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but unrecorded occasion had not only touched her conscience, but led her to God and salvation. She regarded him therefore as her Saviour, and *loved him much;* loved him in proportion to the degradation he had pitied, and the guilt he had removed,—in a word, to the much she had had forgiven. This whole argument, be it observed, rested on two facts; that the sins of the woman were forgiven; and that Christ, to whom she had shown so much love, had forgiven her.—And that which was implied in his argument our Lord immediately publishes expressly, saying to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven," declaring the fact to them, and reiterating to her the assurance of her forgiveness, which must before in some way have been conveyed to her mind, because her love is accounted for by our Lord, from her consciousness that she had had much forgiven. Those who sat at meat, marking the AUTHORITATIVE mode in which this declaration of the woman's forgiveness was made, began to object, *saying, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?* invading, as they affirmed in another place, the authority of God; but lest the woman herself should be disturbed by these murmurs, and to silence all, he repeats the assurance, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Verse 47. *For she loved much.*—Our translation has been thought to make the love of this woman the CAUSE of her forgiveness; but this is contrary to the whole argument, founded upon the case of the two debtors, which makes love the CONSEQUENCE of free and gratuitous forgiveness: so that the notion of the papists built upon this passage, that love is a meritorious cause of the pardon of sin, is contradicted by its whole scope. Most critics, therefore, give an illative sense to ὅτι, and read, "*Wherefore*, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; ὅτι, THEREFORE, she loved much." This avoids theological error; for undoubtedly the cause of her salvation, subordinate to the mercy of Christ, is said (verse 50) to have been her *faith*, not her love,—*Thy faith hath saved thee:* but there seems no reason for depriving ὅτι, in this place, of its usual causal sense, as will appear if we closely consider the meaning of this verse. Our Lord evidently intended to correct Simon's notion respecting this woman, and also to prove that he himself, as he had supposed, was not at all ignorant of her character. Simon assumed her to be a *sinner:* Christ allows her to have been a great sinner, a debtor in five hundred pence, but declares that her many sins were forgiven, urging in proof of this, that she *loved much.* The argument in fact is, *because* she loveth much, she hath had much forgiven, so that she is no longer a polluted *sinner:* and this makes the words sufficiently plain, *Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much,*—the fact is proved by her very love. So Wetstein well remarks, "Love indeed is naturally consequent on remission of sins; that is, she loveth much, *because* many sins are forgiven her. But it may be considered as the mark and token of remission; that is, as it was manifest that Christ was much beloved by her, it might be certainly thence concluded that remission of sins had followed. This Christ addressed to the Pharisee, who thought her *yet* a sinner."

Both this transaction and the parable to which it gave rise, are of great theological importance. The doctrine of the parable is, that pardon of sin is wholly gratuitous, independent of any consideration of worthiness or ability in the sinner. When the debtors had nothing to pay, he *frankly forgave them both*, wholly remitted their debt and cancelled their obligation. Answering to the doctrine of the parable, is the example. A woman who was a *sinner*, yet being a penitent, and having faith in Christ, is freely forgiven. Free and full salvation through the sole mercy of God in Christ, and by faith in his merit, is the glorious doctrine of the New Testament, nor can it lead to any abuse, rightly understood: for he that hath much forgiven will *love much;* and to him that loveth, "the commandments of God are not grievous."

CHAPTER VIII.

3 Women minister unto Christ of their substance. 4 Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended with his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower, 16 and of the candle: 21 declareth who are his mother, and brethren: 22 rebuketh the winds: 26 casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the herd of swine: 37 is rejected of the Gadarenes: 43 healeth the woman of her bloody issue, 49 and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.

1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, [a] out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

4 ¶ [b] And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 [c] Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ [d] No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on

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[a] Mark xvi, 9.—[b] Matt. xiii, 3.

[c] Matt. xiii, 18.—[d] Matt. v, 15.

CHAPTER VIII. Verse 2. *Mary, called Magdalene.*—She was of Magdala, a town of Galilee. That she was a person of respectable circumstances, appears from her being here mentioned with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, Susanna, and others who ministered to him of their substance.—Her always being placed first when other women, even those of some rank are mentioned, indicates also that she was not of the lower class; and as to her character, that cannot be proved to have been manifestly evil from the circumstance of her having been possessed with devils, unless it could be proved that all possessions implied particular guilt in the persons so afflicted. Such an affliction indeed could not exist but among fallen creatures, and only in their unregenerate state; but that it argued any specific depravity does not appear.

Verse 3. *Wife of Herod's steward.*—She might be a widow, or her husband might be favourable to Christ. Επιτροπος is a steward, agent, or manager; some think that here it means *a treasurer* as indeed it is rendered in the Arabic version.

Which ministered to him of their substance.—They had all, it seems, been healed by our Lord of evil spirits and infirmities, that is, some of evil spirits, and others of infirmities; and they showed their gratitude by ministering to the wants of our Lord, and those of his disciples who were in constant attendance upon him.

Verse 5. *A sower went out, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xiii, 3–9.

a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 [e] For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: [f] for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he *seemeth to have.

19 [g] Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ [h] Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 ¶ [i] And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 ¶ Then the whole multitude of the

[e] Matt. x, 26.—[f] Matt. xiii, 12.—* Or, *thinketh that he hath.*—[g] Matt. xii, 46.

[h] Matt. viii, 23.—[i] Matt. viii, 28.

Verse 19. *His mother and his brethren.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 46–50. Joseph not being mentioned, renders it probable that he had died before our Lord entered upon his public ministry. In Mark vi, 3, the family is enumerated; but no mention is made of Joseph. The *mother and the brethren* are here noticed, but there is no allusion to Joseph; and at the crucifixion Jesus commended his mother to the care of John, which appears a certain indication that she was a widow, and probably also that those usually called "the brethren" of our Lord, whether sons of Joseph by a former marriage, or of Joseph and Mary, or the sons of a sister, continued in a state of impenitence and unbelief.

Verse 22. *He went into a ship.*—See the notes on Matt. viii, 23–27.

Verse 26. *Country of the Gadarenes.*—See notes on Matt. viii, 28, &c. For the additional circumstances mentioned by St.

country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 ¶ [k] And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 ¶ And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.

49 ¶ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard *it*, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat,

56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

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[k] St. Matthew, chap. ix, 18.

Mark, see Mark v, 1, &c. St. Luke adds, *they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep*, the abyss, εις την αβυσσον, the place of wicked spirits, whether evil angels or the disembodied spirits of wicked men. It signifies that part of *hades* where the wicked are reserved to the judgment of the great day, but from which the devil and his angels are suffered sometimes to emerge, in order to pursue their malicious works on earth. Under what rules this is done, we know not; all here is mystery; but the Scriptures reveal the *facts*, and they teach us also, for our comfort, that the keys of hades are in the hands of our Saviour.

Verse 41. *Then came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue.*—On the miracles recorded in the remaining part of this chapter, see the notes on Matthew, chapter ix, 18–26, and on Mark v, 21–43.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles, and to preach. 7 Herod desired to see Christ. 17 Christ feedeth five thousand: 18 inquireth what opinion the world had of him: foretelleth his passion: 23 proposeth to all the pattern of his patience. 28 The transfiguration. 37 He healeth the lunatic: 43 again forewarneth his disciples of his passion: 46 commendeth humility: 51 biddeth them to show mildness toward all, without desire of revenge. 57 Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.

1 THEN [a] he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere.

7 ¶ [b] Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. [c] And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 [d] And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

[a] Matt. x, 1.—[b] Matt. xiv, 1.

[c] Matt. xiv, 13.—[d] Matt. xiv, 15.

CHAPTER IX. Verse 1. *Then he called his twelve disciples.*—See notes on the whole of Matt. x.

Verse 7. *Herod the tetrarch.*—See notes on Matt. xiv, 1, &c., and Mark vi, 20.

Verse 11. *And he received them.*—All the evangelists speak of the kindness and compassion with which our Lord treated these eager multitudes who followed him into the desert, to hear his words and to see his miracles; and to describe this they use various expressive phrases. Matthew says that "he was moved with compassion toward them." St. Mark heightens this by adding, "because they were as sheep having no shepherd;" they had no spiritual guides: and St. Luke completes this picture of the benignity and mercy of him who pitied their destitution, and, as the good shepherd, took these thousands of the lost sheep of the house of Israel under his gracious charge. They had indeed intruded upon his solitude; but *he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.*

On the miracle of feeding the *five thousand*, see the notes on Matt. xiv, 15–22, and Mark vi, 35. St. John informs us that this miracle was wrought when *the passover was nigh.* This explains the reason why so great a concourse of people were passing through Capernaum at the time, and appear to have flocked to him in such numbers that he found it necessary to retire; and that five thousand should follow him into the desert, when it was ascertained in what

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

18 ¶ [e] And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some *say*, Elias; and others *say*, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;

22 Saying, [f] The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 ¶ [g] And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 [h] For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 [i] For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 [k] But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these * sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

[e] Matt. xvi, 13.—[f] Matt. xvii, 12.—[g] Matt. x, 38.

[h] Matt. xvi, 26; Mark viii, 36.—[i] Matt. x, 33.
[k] Matt. xvi, 28.—[l] Matt. xvii, 1.—* Or, *things*.

part he was. At this season all the great roads were crowded with people going up to Jerusalem; and Josephus states that the number of persons who were present at one of these festivals was reported to Nero to have been upward of two millions and a half, collected from all parts. The officer who made the calculation reckoned *ten* persons to each passover lamb.

Verses 18–27. *Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist, &c.*—See the notes on Matthew xvi, 13–28.

Verse 29. *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance.*—See the notes on Matt. xvii, 1, &c.

Verse 31. *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease.*—This interesting circumstance is added by St. Luke. Because εξοδος, rendered here *decease*, in classical writers means a military expedition, *a going out* to war, some interpreters have indulged the fancy that the subject of conversation among these exalted personages was Christ's going forth as it were to battle against the rebellious Jews, and destroying Jerusalem. But in addition to the critical reasons against this interpretation, the word is familiarly used by the Hellenists for death, as *exitus* and *excessus* by the Latins; and, as it has been well remarked, was one of those terms which handed down the tradition of the immortality of the soul; death not being the termination of being, but A DEPARTURE only into another state. "When the dead is at rest," says the author of Ecclus., xxxviii, 23, "let his remembrance rest, and be comforted for him, εν εξοδω πνευματος αυτου, in the departure of his spirit." St. Peter also uses the same word, "That ye may be able after my decease, εξοδον, to have these things always in remembrance." The phrase, to *accomplish* or fulfil a death or departure from the world, gives a strong peculiarity to the passage before us. No parallel phrase to express death is to be found in profane or sacred writers; and for this there is sufficient reason. To depart from life is the common lot; but to *fulfil* his decease or departure from the world was peculiar to Christ, because his death was the grand subject of prophecy, the event upon which the salvation of the world was suspended, and the accomplishment of which established for ever the plan of our redemption. With this event Moses and Elias, like the other prophets, had been familiar while upon earth: the former had set up types of it; and the latter, as a spiritual man, and the great restorer of the law, well enough understood their import.—The grand doctrine, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," was held by them all; and their faith had looked beyond the blood of lambs and goats which flowed

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ [m] And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 [n] Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

[m] Matt. xvii, 14.

[n] Matt. xvii, 22.

from their typical altars. In that faith which rested solely upon the merit of the lamb which "God shall provide for a burnt-offering" they died; and now the shedding of the blood of Christ, the true propitiation, was about to confirm them and all the glorified in their title to those realms of light into which they had been admitted in anticipation of Christ's sacrifice, as well as to open the same gate of salvation to future ages.—Who then can wonder, when such consequences depended upon the *accomplishment* of the predicted death of our Lord, that this should be the subject of their converse? The intention of which was not, as some have dreamed, to prepare our Lord's mind for his sufferings; for what could he derive of knowledge or motive from them? But it was entered into by our Lord, no doubt, to instruct these exalted saints themselves more fully in that mystery "which angels desire to look into," and which forms the subject of the loftiest songs, and the basis of the most transporting raptures, of the heavenly world,—redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Verse 32. *And when they were awake.*—They had been *heavy with sleep*; but now they were *thoroughly awake*, as the word signifies.

Verse 38. *A man of the company cried out, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xvii, 14, 15, and Mark ix, 14.

Verses 44, 45. *These sayings sink down into your ears.*—A mode of solemnly enforcing a truth upon the attention; and such was the continual tendency of the disciples to expect that their Master would throw off the veil, and manifest himself in the glory of his regal character, that it was necessary again and again to repeat to them the unwelcome truth of his approaching sufferings and death. The effect of this might be to check in a great measure those extravagant hopes which they were prone to indulge, and hold them in some degree of suspense; but it is added, *they understood not this saying*. They could not indeed mistake the import of the words used; but they probably thought that Christ was speaking in a kind of parable, and was not to be understood literally. The true sense of his words was therefore *hid from them that they perceived it not*. It was hidden, not by any act of God, but by the force of their own prejudices, their wishes being the misleading interpreters. *And they feared to ask him of that saying*; either as remembering the severe reproof which Peter had received, and all of them through him when he said, on a similar occasion, "This be far from thee;" or rather, perhaps this expresses

46 ¶ [o] Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49 ¶ [p] And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, be-

[o] Matt. xviii, 1; Mark ix, 34.

[p] Mark ix, 38.

the deception which they practised upon themselves in reference to a subject on which they were most reluctant to be convinced. They hoped that he used figurative language when he so often and so emphatically spoke of his death; and they *feared to ask him*, lest this pleasing delusion should be dissipated,—a very natural feeling when all the circumstances in which they were placed are considered. We have the key to the great mystery of our Lord's humiliations, which at that time they had not.

Verse 46. *Which of them should be greatest.*—See the notes on Matt. xviii, 1, &c., and Mark ix, 36.

Verse 49. *And John answered, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils, &c.*—See notes on Mark ix, 38.

Verse 51. *When the time was come that he should be received up.*—There can be no question, but that *αναλημψις* here signifies, not the elevation on the cross; nor his going up to Jerusalem, which is afterward expressed; but his being *received up* to God; for the verb is used of the ascension of Christ in several places. The word *συμπληρουσθαι* is not always used absolutely, for the completion of a period within which an event was to take place, but sometimes, as here, the commencement of it as in Gen. xxv, 24, LXX. Now that period had arrived for the commencement of a series of transactions which was to terminate in Christ's being *received up* into his glory. The expression also takes its rise from St. Luke's plan, which was not to follow so much the order of time, as to class events; and he now enters upon his last class, namely, that series which comprehends this last journey of Christ to Jerusalem, and various discourses and actions, ending with the death, resurrection, and *receiving up* of Christ into his glory.

He steadfastly set his face to go, &c.—A Hebrew phrase to denote a firm and resolved purpose, and not indeed wholly peculiar to Jewish writers. Such expressions, though brief, open to us large and interesting views. They show that our Lord was not, by virtue of his being Divine, exempted from the most serious anxieties, and painful anticipations, respecting his approaching sufferings. By virtue of his omniscience the whole scene was opened before him; but under its impression, the humanity felt that which required the renewal and repetition of strong and holy resolutions to overcome. It was this which called forth his earnest prayers, continued through whole nights; and this which rendered it necessary to him as "his hour" approached, *steadfastly to set his face*, to compose himself into a firm and settled resolve *to go up to Jerusalem*, and to meet that malignity of all his enemies to which he knew he must fall a victim. Such was the strength of that love which engaged him in the work of our salvation, the intensity of his desire to complete his glorious work, that he hastened to meet a torturing and an accursed death, to pay the *λυτρον*, our REDEMPTION PRICE, and then to surround himself with the trophies of his own mercy in the number which no man can number, rescued by his conquering arm from the power of Satan, and raised to the joys and immortality of heaven.

Verses 52–56. *Sent messengers before his face.*—They were sent to prepare necessary accommodations for him and his disciples for the night, in this Samaritan village. One of the ways from Galilee up to Jerusalem was through the country of the Samaritans. It is not probable that those Jews who regularly went up to Jerusalem at their great festivals would ordinarily spend a night in a country to the inhabitants of which they bore so great a hatred, and who returned it in equal measure; for they not only showed them no hospitality, but, because of the rivalry existing between their temple on Mount Gerizim, and that at Jerusalem, they were particularly provoked at the multitudes who flocked to Jerusalem at the passover, and, as

cause his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as [q] Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

57 ¶ [r] And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 [s] And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

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[q] 2 Kings i, 10.—[r] Matt. viii, 19.

[s] Matt. viii, 21.

Josephus states, sometimes endeavoured to hinder their progress. Our Lord probably chose that this bigoted churlishness of the Samaritans should, on this occasion, be made manifest, that he might teach his disciples a most important lesson as to their behavior in similar circumstances. They *did not receive him*,—they would not suffer him to lodge in their village; because *his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem*,—because it was plain from the direction he was taking, that he was travelling up to the metropolis to celebrate the passover. And *James and John said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven to consume them, as Elias did?* What was the reply of our Lord? *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* Perhaps they knew not that in truth there was much more of Jewish hatred in their hearts to the Samaritans, than of zeal for the vindication of their Master's honour; but, however that might be, they were obviously ignorant of the spirit and genius of the Gospel, which allows no retaliation of injuries, and inculcates the spirit of meekness and forgiveness of injuries; and perceived not that their zeal was evil, and that they were unworthy disciples of Him who came not to *destroy men's lives, but to save them*. And having so said, *he went to another village*.

They were not far from the place where Elijah called down fire from heaven upon the two captains and their fifties, sent to apprehend him; and they might there wish to be revenged upon the Samaritans, justified by his example. But the cases were not in the least parallel. The Jews, under their theocracy, were subject to a system of temporal rewards and punishments immediately inflicted or bestowed by Jehovah, their governor. In this case the king had sent to apprehend God's prophet and representative, and had been guilty of a crime against the Divine majesty, which was thus publicly punished. It was a case in which God himself interposed to defend his servant by a signal vengeance upon a wicked prince and his servants. But, in the case of these erring disciples, the matter was one of national prejudice and personal resentment; and into such hands God would not put his thunderbolts. The genius of the Gospel is also essentially different from that of the law. In the latter civil government was blended with religion, and God acted as Judge; but under the Gospel we stand only in spiritual relations, and the time of judgment is deferred to *one day*, to be executed by that *one man* whom God hath appointed. "Now is the appointed time, now is the day of salvation;" and, after the example of Christ, all his followers ought to be occupied only in the work of saving and blessing men, leaving vengeance to Him to whom it belongs, and to that future time when He who only can be an infallible judge in the case shall "give to every man according as his work shall be."

The clause, *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*, is rejected by Griesbach and some other editors, as an interpolation from a marginal gloss, and it is not found in many MSS. The context, however, appears to require it; and it bears strong internal evidence of being the genuine words of our blessed Saviour. They are equivalent to, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Verse 57. *A certain man, &c.*—See notes on Matt. viii, 19, 20.

Verse 59. *Suffer me to go first and bury, &c.*—See notes on Matt. viii, 21.

Verse 62. *No man, having put his hand to the plough.*—To put the hand to the plough is a proverbial expression for undertaking

any work, and is used also by Greek writers. A man engaged in ploughing, if he *looks back* or behind, being careless at his work, is unfit for the occupation of ploughing. He must look steadily down upon his plough and the soil, that he may make straight furrows, and effectually turn up the ground. The allusion teaches that all worldly regards turn the attention of ministers from their proper work, on which they ought to be intently fixed, as a good ploughman upon the direction of his plough, and the course of his furrow. He who has observed how constantly the attention is fixed in the act of ploughing, so that nothing diverts the ploughman from his occupation, will perceive the force of this powerful and admonitory comparison. The minister of Christ must be a man of one business; and he that looks back, either from carelessness or love of the world, in other words, he that suffers his attention and affections to be distracted, is not *fit for the kingdom of God*, not fit for its service, not fit to preach it; for the words were spoken to one whom our Lord had called to *follow him*, that he might employ him in preaching.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles, and to preach:* 17 *admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice:* 21 *thanketh his Father for his grace:* 23 *magnifieth the happy estate of his Church:* 25 *teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy:* 41 *reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.*

1 After [a] these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, [b] The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: [c] behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

5 [d] And into whatsoever house ye enter first say, Peace *be* to this house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating

[a] Matt. x, 1.—[b] Matt. ix, 37.

[c] Matt. x, 16.—[d] Matt. x, 11.

CHAPTER X. Verse 1. *Other seventy also.*—Seventy other preachers beside the twelve apostles before appointed, and who had fulfilled their commission in another direction. Our Lord, who had laboured chiefly in Galilee, was about to visit several parts of Judea; and these seventy disciples were sent to those cities and villages *whither he himself would come*, to prepare his way, by preaching his doctrine, and confirming it by miracles in his name. In going up to Jerusalem he made short stages, visiting many places. This mission, from the number of those employed, was soon accomplished; and hence we read of their speedy return. St. Luke alone mentions this mission of the seventy; and ancient tradition affirms that he was of the number,—a fact which is not confirmed by the introduction to this gospel, which rather intimates that he was of a subsequent class of disciples. In the choice of *twelve* apostles, and *seventy* other preachers, there was reference probably to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to the seventy elders of Israel, and also to the sanhedrim or grand ecclesiastical assembly of Jewish doctors, consisting of seventy persons. Some, indeed, think the sanhedrim to have had seventy-two members; and from this notion it was that some of the fathers conclude that there were seventy-two disciples, called seventy as a round number, according to the Jewish mode. It is of more consequence to observe that our Lord appears by these numbers to have intimated that he was displacing the old Church, and forming a new one, with its appropriate officers of apostles, elders, and instructers, to govern and teach it.

Verse 2. *The harvest truly is great.*—The harvest in Judea as well as Galilee. See the notes on Matt. ix, 37.

Verse 3. *Go your ways, &c.*—Our Lord gives many of the same directions to the seventy, as he had done to the twelve. See the notes on Matt. x.

Verse 6. *The son of peace.*—The meaning is, If the master of the house be a man of kind and friendly disposition, returning your salutation, which was a form of wishing peace in the same language and spirit, *your peace shall rest upon the house.* It would not be an empty form, but prove an

and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 [e] Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

16 [f] He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

17 ¶ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to

[e] Matt. xi, 21.

[f] Matt. x, 40.

effectual prayer, bringing down the peace and blessing of God. In the Jewish style, a man who has any good or bad quality is called the son of it. Hence we have sons of wisdom, for wise men; and in the text, *son of peace*, for a man of peaceable and friendly disposition.

If not, it shall turn to you again.—The salutation, *Peace be to this house*, shall not be effectual. There is a similar expression in Psalm xxxv, 13: "And my prayer returned into mine own bosom."

Verses 7–12. *And in the same hour, &c.*—See notes on Matt. x.

Verse 13. *Wo unto thee, Chorazin.*—See notes on Matt. xi, 21–23.

Verse 17. *Through thy name.*—This was the grand distinction between the miracles of our Lord and those of his servants. One was wrought by an original, the other by a derived power; his, says Grotius, *vi propria*, by his own power, theirs, *vi magistri*, by the power of Christ. As heretofore demons had been ejected in the name of the God of Israel, they were now cast out in the name of Jesus.

Verses 18, 19. *I beheld Satan, &c.*—The disciples returned with joyful suprise to announce that the devils had been subject to them through the name of Christ. Our Lord's calm reply indicates that they were conveying no news to him; he had been with them in spirit, knew all that had passed, by virtue of his omniscience, and he answers, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* To fall from heaven is, in prophetic language, to fall from a height of power and authority. So the king of Babylon is addressed, Isaiah xiv, 12:—"How art thou fallen from heaven!" The Latins have the same mode of expression. Pompey is said by Cicero, *ex astris decidisse*, "to have fallen from the stars." Upon the kingdom of Satan our Lord was making war, both by casting out devils by his word, or by his name, and by rescuing the souls of men from his power, by the hallowing influence of his heavenly doctrine. Even by his weak and despised disciples was he effecting this casting down of Satan from *the heaven* of that dominion he had so long held. But he promises to render those disciples still more formidable to the kingdom of darkness, by increasing those miraculous endowments with which he had already enriched them; which was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost. For the mission of the seventy, like that of the twelve apostles, was to be considered as emblematical of that ministry which they were, with enlarged powers and heightened qualifications, to be permanently employed in. *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions*, not only literally, though they had that; but figuratively, over devils and their agents, fitly represented, as to their cunning and deadly cruelty, by serpents and scorpions: *And over all the power of the enemy*, however displayed, or by whatever instruments wielded against you: *And nothing shall by any means hurt you*, that is, nothing shall injure you as to your work, which shall prevail against all opposition; or injure you personally: no affliction being permitted till it shall turn out for the fartherance of the Gospel, and your spiritual welfare, and the greatest tyrants not being able to inflict death upon you until your death itself shall be a benefit, and not an evil, both

tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 ¶ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast

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to yourselves and to the cause in which you suffer. This total exemption from harm, by all things being made to work together for the good of them who love God, belongs, in an important sense, to all Christians; for it was with reference to this encouraging and elevating doctrine that St. Peter, when writing even to suffering and persecuted Christians, says, "And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

Verse 20. *Because your names are written in heaven.*—The words are plainly metaphorical; for that God keeps a book, and writes in it the names of his servants, is too gross a conception to be entertained even by children. The allusion here is either to the public enrolment of the names of citizens in their respective cities, in a book kept for that purpose, so that those whose names were found there were entitled to the rights, immunities, and privileges of citizenship, which in many cases were objects of great honour and ambition; or more generally to the record kept of the names of all living Israelites,—which appears to have given rise to the phrase, the "book of life," and to "blotting the name out of the book," to express death, because the names of the dead were obliterated,—and to which also the Apostle Paul alludes, when he speaks of the Church or assembly of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

As those written in the book of life were Israelites, and entitled to all the privileges of the Jewish Church and nation, so Christians as forming the true and spiritual Israel of God are said to have their names enrolled in heaven. This has no relation to predestination and election from eternity; but expresses the actual relation and acceptance of the persons referred to by God. As the Israelite after the flesh obtained his enrolment by virtue of his natural birth, so the spiritual Israelite obtains his by virtue of his reconciliation and new birth. This is the foundation of the distinction. It rests not upon supposed eternal decrees, but upon the actual experience of man in the forgiveness of sin, and the renewal of his heart; and it was for this reason that our Lord bade the seventy rejoice, not because they were endowed with miraculous powers, which were no certain evidences of grace, either of its reality or its degree; and which had no direct relation to their final salvation; but rather to rejoice that God had accepted them as his people, the members of his Church, and the heirs of his eternal kingdom. He thus taught them, and he teaches us, to estimate the most splendid gifts, as nothing in comparison with real piety; since the former indeed might, as he teaches us elsewhere, fail to give us any title to be received into his kingdom; while the latter brings every one who lives under its influence, into vital communion with God here, and will, if persevered in, infallibly secure his final acceptance with God at the last day. He who in this spirit "endureth to the end shall be saved." This great lesson is lost in those comments which consider these words as a declaration of the eternal election of the seventy disciples, to whom they were originally addressed; and awkwardly brings in a subject which had at best, if true, a very distant relation to any part of the context.—Certain also it is, that if this registry of the names of true believers had any reference to their eternal election, the fact of their names being written in heaven could give them no security of eternal salvation, since Christ threatens some to blot out their names from the book of life, Rev. xxii, 19, and promises others, Rev. iii, 5, that he will not blot out their names.

Verse 21. *Jesus rejoiced in spirit.*—The subject of this exulting and grateful excitement in the mind of our Lord must have been important. It is not often that we read of his manifesting such emotions of joy; and nothing but considerations of the mightiest character can be supposed to have produced a manifestation of them visible to all the seventy who were with him, the twelve apostles, and probably many other disciples.—This strong emotion could scarcely have been produced by the short mission of the seventy on this occasion, and the works they had wrought. He regarded them rather in this as making an essay in preparation for that wonderful ministry they were to accomplish; for that it was with reference to their whole ministerial life that he addressed both the twelve and the seventy, in the discourses he held with them on their appointment, many parts of those discourses themselves sufficiently prove. On this occasion, both the seventy who had just returned, and the twelve apostles also, stood before him, when he offered this ardent thanksgiving, in which he recognized at once the sovereignty of God to choose his own instruments to accomplish his own designs, and his wisdom and power in accomplishing such events by an agency despised by the world, but which brought to shame all that the world

hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 * All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 ¶ And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, [g] Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*;

and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, [h] Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

* Many ancient copies add these words: *And turning to his disciples, he said:*

[g] Matt. xiii, 16.—[h] Matt. xxii, 35.

had held wise and great. "The scribe," "the disputer," the philosopher, were all confounded, when it had pleased God, by the instrumentality of these simple men, to fill the earth with the profoundest wisdom on all theological and moral subjects, and to implant a system which all foresaw must ultimately absorb all others, and by the very force of its own internal evidence fix an everlasting conviction of its truth and Divinity in the hearts of men. In fact, the true Christian ministry is the most wonderful institution ever introduced among mankind.—It is that which gives a new life to the soul, creates a new order of feelings, awakens men out of the sleep of sin, leads them in penitence and prayer to God, produces such a trust in Christ as is followed by peace of conscience and the supporting assurance of the friendship of God, inspires man with a moral power which he has not by nature, exerts a sanctifying influence upon his affections, raises him into the condition of a spiritual man, and completes its high office by presenting the souls which it has trained under its godly discipline purged from every spot of sin, and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Such effects produced by the visible agency of weak and inefficient men, and hence called "babes," implies necessarily the constant agency of God in its most gracious and condescending as well as powerful operations; and under these views our Lord offers this thanksgiving, and acknowledges the wondrous work of God. See the notes on Matt. xi, 25–27.

Verse 24. *Many prophets and kings have desired.*—Of the prophets and inspired kings, as Moses, David, Josiah, &c., here referred to, St. Peter says, "They searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of the Christ, and the glory that should follow." Distant and obscure, though to them most interesting, visions of the future intensely fixed their attention, and produced the strongest desires for clearer knowledge on subjects all-important to them, and to mankind at large. See the notes on Matt. xiii, 16, 17.

Verses 25, 26. *A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him.*—The lawyers, νομικοι, were interpreters and teachers of the Mosaic law. They were the same as the scribes. To *tempt* here signifies to prove his skill by a question, which was a favourite mode of trying each other's skill among the Jewish doctors. It was one, probably, debated in their schools, and to which various answers would be given, just as some estimated the comparative importance of different duties, or of ceremonial observances. Our Lord's answer, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* seems intended to turn the attention from all the vain disputations of the schools, and the opinions of mere men, on this grave question, to the written word of God. The Jews had a revelation of the will of God; and an answer to the question, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* must of necessity be found there. Our Lord therefore somewhat reprovingly said, *How readest thou?*

Verse 28. *This do, and thou shalt live.*—This is the religion of both the Old and the New Testament. It has indeed been said that our Lord said this only to convince the inquirer that life by the law was impossible, and that obedience to the command is impracticable. But nothing appears to warrant this in the history itself. When our Lord commended the answer, he showed that this was the way to life opened by the Mosaic institute; and when he repeats, *This do, and thou shalt live*, he shows that this

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

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also is the way to eternal life, under his own dispensation. Under the law of Moses, the forgiveness of sin was provided for by sacrifice, and so under the Gospel; the Holy Spirit was also formerly promised to those who sought the gift, to renew their nature.—"Thy Spirit," says David, "is good: lead me into the land of uprightness." And still more largely is that heavenly gift promised by Christ; but the great practical end and effect of our redemption, and all the promises of God, is, that we may be brought to love him with all our *heart*, *soul*, *strength*, and *mind*, that is, with the might of all our affections, and our neighbour as ourselves. Faith leads to pardon; a sense of forgiving mercy produces LOVE: love is the great principle of true obedience, and when supreme and universal, produces the willing consecration of our entire service to God.—So as to our neighbour: love is the great principle here; it extinguishes all the malignant, selfish, and irascible passions, and is, as to the duties of the second table, "the fulfilling of the law." All this is NECESSARY to eternal life; and if so, all this is POSSIBLE, by the grace of God.

Verse 29. *But he, willing to justify himself, &c.*—Some have thought that the scribe, expecting our Lord to describe his neighbour according to the Jewish idea, as a man of his own nation and religion, thought that he should *justify* or prove himself righteous by averring that he had always strictly observed this branch of the law. But we are rather to conclude that he felt himself somewhat piqued at being referred to the written testimony of the law as an answer to his question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" as though it were a very plain and simple one; and answered by a mere reference to a well known scripture, and that, *willing to justify himself* in having propounded such a question, he intimates that it was not so easily answered as our Lord had suggested; but that, as to the duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves, a question might arise. He therefore *said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?* Many of the Jewish teachers would not allow a Gentile, nor even a proselyte, to be intended in the law enjoining the love of our neighbour; and they excluded the Samaritans with still bitterer hostility. This churlish and exclusive spirit, though no doubt often exaggerated, is made matter of reproach against them by heathen writers, as by Tacitus: "*Apud ipsos misericordia in promptu; sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium;*" and also Juvenal, Sat. xiv, 103. But the very question of the lawyer shows that the subject had been debated in the Jewish schools; and although the proud, exclusive spirit of Pharisaism predominated, a few had been found to advocate a more rational and religious interpretation of this important law. It was to settle this point for ever that our Lord spake the beautiful and affecting parable which follows.

Verse 30. *A certain man.*—A Jew, as the whole story shows, for the points turn upon it.

From Jerusalem to Jericho.—In the days of Christ Jericho was a large and important city, and had a royal palace, where Herod died. It was numerously inhabited by priests, who had to go up to Jerusalem to attend at the temple service in their regular courses. See chap. i, 5. The road would therefore often be travelled by priests and Levites, a circumstance which forms part of the picture of the parable. A part of the road was wild and rocky, and notoriously infested with robbers. The whole road from Jerusalem to Jericho is described by modern travellers as, at this day, the most dangerous in Palestine, from the numbers of robberies and murders committed upon it.

Verses 33–35. *But a certain Samaritan.*—The point of the parable lies here. The man left by the road side, half dead, was a Jew; the priest and Levite, who unfeelingly passed by on the other side, after they had seen him, were of course Jews, and Jews who from their office and character were most bound to an observance of the law of their God; but the man who actually treated this unfortunate Jew as a *neighbour*, and exemplified the true spirit and meaning of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was *a Samaritan*, before whose conscientious and warm charity all distinctions of nation and religion, all prejudices

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two * pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about

* See Matthew, chap. xx, 2.

of education and habit and associations, vanished, so that he was intent only on fulfilling the law of love. The benevolence of this excellent Samaritan, which probably was not an ideal picture, but a real occurrence, is so amplified by our Lord, that one feels, in reading the words, that his heart delighted to dwell upon the scene. *When he saw him, he had compassion upon him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine*, both which were used as medicaments by the ancient surgeons; *and set him on his own beast*, himself going on foot, and not influenced by the fear of not being able to escape from robbers if attacked while so encumbered with a wounded stranger; *and brought him to an inn*, πανδοχειον, a house of public entertainment for travellers; *and took care of him*, by personal attendance and procuring for him all necessary aid during that day and the following night; and departing *on the morrow*, pressed probably by his own concerns, he places two *denarii*, Roman pence, about fifteen pence of our money, in the hands of the host, with an injunction *to take care of him*, and an engagement to pay all additional expenses upon his return. Nothing could be more complete than this act of charity. It stopped short of nothing, but performed all that the circumstances required, being simply intent, not upon making an appearance, not upon compounding matters with conscience by a half and imperfect effort at exercising kindness, but upon relieving the case, and placing the unfortunate man in the best circumstances to promote his recovery.

Verses 36, 37. *Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour? &c.*—Which of the three *fulfilled the office of neighbour?* To this the answer was imperative. The kindness being done to a Jew, he could not say that the Samaritan had done more than his duty, as he might have replied had the unfortunate man been a Samaritan, and the person relieving him a Jew. They denied, indeed, the right of others to their kindness, but, as God's chosen people, thought they had a right to be served by all others; and therefore the lawyer must needs commend the benevolence of the Samaritan. This then being granted, the great moral was explicitly laid down: *Go, and do thou likewise;* compassionate and relieve the distressed, without any respect to nation or religion; be a neighbour to every man that needs thy assistance, and consider him thy neighbour, one who according to the law thou art to love as thyself. Thus our Lord teaches that this law is binding upon all men, and that all men are neighbours of each other. He breaks down, as to the obligation of this great social statute, all the distinction of nation and religion, all the divisions created by interests and partial affections, erects the whole community of man into one neighbourhood, and binds each individual to serve another by all kinds of good offices. Nor is this to be admired only as a just and noble sentiment. Sentiments somewhat similar may be found in some pagan writers, the relics of that traditional truth and morality which descended from the patriarchs; but in them these are *opinions*, and not *law*. In Christianity they are not only more perfectly stated, and radicated in their true principles, but they become *obligatory;* they seize upon the conscience, and connect themselves as THE LAW of Christ with our hopes and fears. That they have not hitherto been so influential as they ought in this bad world, is true; but that they have had, in all ages, a large and happy influence, is certain.

Verse 38. *A certain village, and a certain woman.*—The village was Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. The woman was Martha: the family was that which Jesus loved, composed of Martha, Lazarus, and Mary. From Martha receiving Jesus into her house hospitably to entertain him, it appears that she was its mistress, and that Lazarus and Mary resided with her. Grotius conjectures, with probability, that Martha was a widow.

Verse 39. *Which also sat at Jesus' feet, &c.*—To sit at the feet, is a mode of describing a disciple, because this was the attitude; the Master sitting, and the disciples forming a semicircle about his feet. That Mary very literally took this position with the other disciples, may be doubted; the words only indicating that she was a diligent and attentive

much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

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hearer of Christ's discourses. This too was the character of Martha. She was a disciple, for Mary is said *also* to sit at Jesus' feet, that is, as Martha did. When our Lord visited them, they both placed themselves with the others, as attentive, believing, and deeply interested auditors; and probably, like several other female disciples, followed him to various places, and heard his words, and witnessed his wondrous works. On this occasion, our Lord's visit appears to have been improved, with special diligence, by Mary, who left all other occupations to continue within the hearing of those words which conveyed to her so much instruction, and life, and joy. Both Martha and Mary were common names among the Jews; Mary is the same as Miriam.

Verses 40–42. *But Martha was cumbered, &c.*—The word περισπαω signifies to *draw around* or *aside*, and is therefore properly applied to express those cares which absorb the attention, and lead it from that which ought also to be observed and done, as well as the immediate object of solicitude. The same word is used by Epictetus, when describing the distractions to which that man must necessarily be exposed who, fond of externals, has yet some relish for mental improvement and cultivation. Martha was thus *drawn aside* by her anxious care to have the meal properly prepared and served, in honour of her Lord, from paying that attention to the words of Christ which the opportunity presented, and which Mary embraced. Not only so, but she thought her excess in this respect right, and therefore complains of her sister, nay, even of our Lord himself, who, by detaining Mary by his discourse, she intimates, partook of the blame of not sufficiently caring that she was left alone to the bustle and fatigue of the occasion. Our Lord's reply is at once full of wisdom and affection. The repetition of her name twice in his address showed that he was uttering a solemn caution, as to a person in danger. The state of her mind was both *careful and troubled*, too anxious because inwardly disquieted and querulous; a state inconsistent with self-possession, the spirit of prayer, and delight in God. It does not appear that our Lord condemns the *many things* about which Martha cared; but her caring unnecessarily and in too great a degree about them. Those who fancy that he enjoins one dish instead of many, debase the passage entirely; and it is certain that our Lord often partook of public dinners, after the mode of the country, without objection: besides, if by the one needful thing is meant one dish, what can be understood by Mary having chosen *that good part* which should not be taken away from her? By the *good part* our Lord must, in all fair interpretation, mean the same as the one thing which he had declared to be needful, or the connection of the sentence is lost. He could not therefore refer to dishes or foods, since the time of the meal had not arrived, and Mary was not choosing any thing already upon the table, or selecting any thing to be brought there. The absurdity of the interpretation, not less than its trifling and jejune character, is sufficient to refute it. The meaning is well expressed in the paraphrase of Grotius: "Various and multiplied are the cares of this life: but there is one thing which, if we would be saved, is altogether and indispensably necessary to us, namely, the care of religion and piety, and the study of Divine things." A most important moral is thus taught, which ought to be deeply engraven upon the heart of every human being. As Martha was not forbidden to care about the affairs of her house, but to care excessively, so to care, in fact, as to neglect important opportunities of instruction and salvation; so we are not prohibited from a proper attention to the affairs of this life, but are exhorted to subordinate them all to our higher and eternal interests, and so to engage in them as not to be hurried and distracted or absorbed by them, but so as still to leave the mind unembarrassed, in the exercise of holy affections, and in the performance of holy duties. Those who would go to the other extreme, and argue, like the papists, from this passage, in favour of the contemplative life, to the renunciation of active duties, find no real countenance from the history rightly understood. That Mary did not renounce her domestic engagements and affairs in consequence of her discipleship, is plain from this, that she was not, any more than Martha, a constant follower of Christ. We never read of her being in his train either before or after this visit, except when he was at Bethany or the neighbourhood. She was not, therefore, one of those who were commanded to leave all and follow Christ, and was, in all probability, as active in the family as Martha. But on this occasion she lost no part of the opportunity of hearing Christ; and yet it does not follow that she neglected any part of her duty, nor that Martha would have neglected any part of hers, had she sat as closely as her sister at the feet of Christ. Preparations

for this visit had, doubtless, been made; as people of wealth, they had servants at command; and the affairs of the house and table would, in all likelihood, have gone on as well or better had not Martha given herself up to chafing, restless, and distracting cares. No defect of real duty is implied in the case of Mary; but excess of solicitude and bustle is certainly implied in the reproof administered to Martha. Yet was Martha a good woman, loved by her Lord, and, as a proof of that, reproved by him. She had a dangerous habit of indulging an anxious mind; this was her weakness and her source of danger; but this reproof probably cured the evil. In the account we have of St. John, she appears before us as a woman of a noble and most exalted faith. Let all who have the natural fault of Martha, be corrected by the reproof which our Lord administers to them through her; for, as Mr. Baxter truly, though quaintly, remarks, "preferring things unnecessary, though good, and troubling ourselves about NEED-NOTS, is a common fault, even of religious persons."

Which shall not be taken away from her.—She hath made choice of an imperishable good, the effects of which will endure to eternity. Mary therefore wisely regulated her cares by the true measure and proportion of things; and gave up her whole affection only to those objects which were spiritual and enduring. There is one good which we, through the mercy of God, can command, and but one. That is THE CHIEF GOOD. Every other may be taken away by time, accident, by the power of man, by the stripping and impoverishing hand of death. But this is above all such accidents, it is a "life hid with Christ in God." Of this truth several of the heathen sages had some notion. "The true good," says one, "is something strictly belonging to and within ourselves, and that cannot easily be taken from us;" and another makes it a characteristic of virtue that "it cannot be taken away," *αρητη αναφαιρετον*.

CHAPTER XI.

1 Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly: 11 assuring that God so will give us good things. 14 He casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees: 28 and showeth who are blessed: 29 preacheth to the people, 37 and reprehendeth the outward show of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers.

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, [a] Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us * day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of

[a] Matt. vi, 9.

* Or, *for the day.*

CHAPTER XI. Verses 1–4. *Our Father which art in heaven.*—See the notes on Matt. vi, 9–13. The doxology, "For thine is the kingdom," &c., is wanting in St. Luke. It is evident, however, that the prayer as it here stands is a shortened form of that prescribed in the sermon on the mount, and taught on a different occasion. The full form is therefore to be sought in the longer discourse; and we act right in always using this divinely composed prayer with the doxology, which leaves the heart fixed upon God, as its first petition elevates it to him. The Jewish doctors taught their disciples short forms of prayer. This was a well-known practice; and it is to be gathered from the text that John the Baptist gave to his disciples also a form suited to his peculiar and transitive dispensation. Perhaps the disciple who made this request, did not know that he had already given a form of prayer in his sermon on the mount; or, as that was given in the presence of the multitude, he might think that the disciples had not been sufficiently distinguished, and that they ought to have a prayer peculiar to themselves like those of the Baptist. If the latter was the reason of the request, our Lord, by repeating the same prayer he had before taught, intimated that it was sufficiently adapted to their case; and this affords a reason why he does not repeat it at full, since he intended only to bring it to the remembrance of the disciple who made the request.

Verses 5, 6. *Which of you shall have a friend, &c.*—This is one of several parables which our blessed Lord at different times uttered to encourage importunity, and

you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of * mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

* Or, *out of the way.*

9 [b] And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 [c] If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children:

[b] Matt. vii, 7.—[c] Matt. vii, 9.

repeated application in prayer. His form of prayer contains not many petitions, but they are most comprehensive and important: and he teaches not so much to vary and multiply our petitions, as though prayer were an exercise of intellectual or imaginative ingenuity; but to plead them before our heavenly Father with an earnestness and importunity suitable to the greatness of the blessing asked. For, although he knows what we want; and needs not exciting to bestow his gifts upon us, yet it is necessary that we also should know our wants, should enter by deep and serious consideration into their nature, and that we should seek them with fitting desires, which we must stir up vigorously within our hearts. The great point to be remembered is, that we MUST attain the blessings we ask, or perish; and if, therefore, God should sometimes hear us instantly and with no delay, and at others should seem to disregard, we are to "continue in prayer," and knock till the door is opened to us.

At midnight.—Journeys in the east are often performed in the night, on account of the heats of the day. The arrival of a friend at midnight was therefore no unusual occurrence. *Three loaves* were not a large supply of bread, as they were but three cakes.

Verse 7. *My children are with me in bed.*—That is, asleep on mattresses in the same room, according to the custom of those countries. He urges it as a reason why he should not rise, lest he should awake the young children.

Verses 8, 9. *Because of his importunity.*—It is supposed that the applicant, disregarding all the excuses of his neighbour, continues knocking and urging his request, until, from no other motive than merely to escape his importunity, which would take no denial, he grants the request. The argument to encourage earnest perseverance in prayer derives its force from contrast: if a churlish man will yield to importunity, how much more shall the blessed God himself, who is perfect benevolence, and delights in bestowing his benefits upon the needy, answer the reiterated requests of those that call upon him! The whole tends to impress us with the necessity of obtaining the fulfilment of our petitions, and thus to guard against a common and fatal evil, that of resting in prayer as an END, without regarding it but as a MEANS of obtaining the petitions we present. How many rest here! They have done a duty, that is enough! which is a fatal infatuation. If we have not received what we ask, hitherto we have prayed in vain; and we are at once reminded that the end of praying is receiving, and encouraged to repeat our requests by the assurance that they must be ultimately successful. Hence our Lord adds, *Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.* See the notes on Matt. vii, 7-11. This is an instance of another portion of the sermon on the mount being spoken on quite a distinct occasion.

Verse 13. *Give the Holy Spirit.*—In St. Matthew it is "give good things;" and the variation here is important, as we are taught that among those good things is included that sum of all moral and spiritual good to man, the Holy Spirit. Nor is it to be confined to the first disciples, since it is as extensive as the duty of importunate prayer, which our Lord had been urging. If the duty be therefore universal, then is the promise universal, and every one who importunately prays shall receive the Holy Spirit. It follows therefore that the miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, such as some, but by no means a large proportion, of the primitive Christians were endowed with, could not be intended. These were always partial in extent, and we know, in fact, that they were temporary in duration; and yet the duty of prayer is binding upon all, in all

how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

14 ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, [d] He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others tempting *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

[d] Matt. ix, 34; xii, 24.

ages, and the promise of the Holy Spirit still stands as our encouragement to that exercise. His gracious influence upon the mind must therefore be intended to enlighten, to invigorate, to quicken, to purify, and to comfort us. This is the introduction of a new power into the heart of man, even the restoring and sanctifying influence of God, which all who seek shall find, while all who find it are raised above their former selves, and become new creatures. "This promise," says Archbishop Tillotson, "assures to us the continual presence and influence of the Holy Ghost, for all the purposes of guidance and direction, of grace and assistance, of comfort and support, in our Christian course." Without this great endowment we are not true Christians. It is the source of all spiritual life here, and the earnest of eternal life hereafter. We are therefore not only encouraged, but bound to ask it seriously and importunately, as we value our salvation. For, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Verses 14, 15. *It was dumb.*—That is, the devil had rendered the unhappy subject of his malice *dumb*.

And the people wondered.—It was the astonishment of the people at the casting out of devils by our Lord which rendered them so favourably disposed to his doctrine. They were miracles of the most impressive kind. The affliction relieved was the greatest conceivable one to which human beings could be subject; the torments inflicted were of the most frightful kind, the evil was apparently farther than any out of the reach of human relief, while the frequency of the occurrence of these possessions, in those times, served to indicate that the kingdom of darkness was making constant aggression upon them, so as to bring both the souls and bodies of men into captivity. Great therefore was the wonder and great the joy of the unsophisticated people, when they saw the armed strong man bound and cast out by one stronger than himself; and they were ready to hail our Lord universally as the Messiah, when the scribes and Pharisees, with malignant subtlety, invented and spread abroad the aspersion, and enforced it by all the weight that their reputed wisdom and sanctity gave them among the people, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, *the chief of the devils*, and that these very miracles were therefore "lying wonders," to lead them astray from the law of God, which they represented Jesus as aiming to destroy. It was this that ensnared and perverted a people who were at one time "prepared for the Lord," and blasted all the blooming prospects of usefulness which opened to our Lord throughout the whole region of Galilee. They neither entered the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffered them that were at one time well disposed to do so. See notes on Matt. xii, 22–32.

Verses 21, 22. *When a strong man armed, &c.*—These words were designed to show both that Christ was stronger than Satan, and that he was hostile to him, instead of being in league with him, as the Pharisees insinuated. Had there been such a league, in fact, then the *goods* of Satan would have been *in peace*, his possessions would have been undisturbed; but the very fact that they were not at peace, that the strong castle had been assailed and taken, the spoil seized, and the captives liberated, was sufficient to prove that a state of most vigorous warfare had been commenced, and that there could be no "concord between Christ and Belial." The language is military: to *come upon*, is to attack; and the stripping of the *armour*, and the division of the *spoils*, are according to the ancient treatment of conquered enemies.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 [e] When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea, rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 ¶ [f] And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

33 [g] No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel, * but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

[e] Matt. xii, 43.

[f] Matt. xii, 38.—[g] Matt. v, 15.—* See Matt. v, 15.

Verse 23. *He that is not with me, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 28–30.

Verse 24. *When the unclean spirit, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 43–45.

Verse 27. *Blessed is the womb, &c.*—A form of expression which occurs in Greek writers, and was very common among the Jews when great admiration was felt. "Blessed is she that bore him," is the complimentary phrase used of celebrated rabbins.

Verse 28. *Yea, rather, blessed.*—Our Lord allows the blessedness of his mother. She had been declared *blessed* by the spirit of prophecy, and he confirms that sentence; but he speaks of a superior blessedness to hers, considered merely as flowing from her having been his mother,—the blessedness of hearing and keeping the word of God.—This stands in direct opposition to the extravagant notions of the blessedness which in subsequent ages was superstitiously and idolatrously ascribed to the Virgin Mary. For if, in consequence of her having been the mother of Christ, she has been exalted to the nearest place to God in heaven, if she has been invested, in fact, with the very attributes of Deity, so as to be able to distribute blessings of every kind upon her worshippers, she has attained more than any one can attain by merely hearing and keeping the word of God. But superior blessedness is attached to this by our Lord; from which we may conclude that the blessedness of Mary consisted in that satisfaction of her mind which arose from the reflection that she was the mother of Messiah, and in the distinction which was thus conferred upon her above all women. From this alone, however, she derived none of those spiritual advantages which come from hearing and keeping the word of God; the pardon of sin, the assistance of grace, spiritual fellowship with God, and eternal life. These are inseparably connected with those,—hearing, faith, and obedience; and the blessedness which they impart is not only given to all who perform the condition, but is infinitely higher and more valuable than that which Mary derived from having brought forth the promised seed. What importance is thus stamped upon *hearing* the word of God, that is, paying all due attention to understand it, and then receiving it in the simplicity of an entire faith; and *keeping*, that is, carefully observing it as the rule of our whole conduct,—that by which we are to order our inward frame and temper of mind, the words of our lips, and the actions of our life!

Verse 30. *As Jonas was a sign, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xii, 40.

Verse 31. *The queen of the south.*—See the note on Matt. xii, 42.

Verse 33. *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, &c.*—This and the following three verses are also portions of the sermon on the mount. See the notes on Matt. v, 15, and vi, 22, 23. But the occasion was different, and they are here used, not so much as general truths, as adapted to the occasion and

34 [h] The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he

[h] St. Matthew, chap. vi, 22.

the previous discourse. Our Lord had been reproving those who demanded some greater *sign* than they had received, and he reminds them, that he had already placed clear and decisive evidence of the truth of his mission before them; and as no man lights a lamp *to put it in a secret place, or under a bushel; but on a lampstand, that they which come in may see the light;* so he had performed his illustrious works publicly before the whole nation. But then, as only a sound eye transmits the outward light within; and as a diseased or *evil eye* intercepts it, and leaves the body full of darkness; so he teaches them that if the truth of his mission had not been received by any, its demonstrative evidence had been intercepted by an ill-disposed and prejudiced mind, which, like a diseased eye shutting out the light of a lamp, would leave them in total moral darkness, and fatal error. Hence the solemn caution which follows, *Take heed therefore that the light which is within thee be not darkness.* As to the scribes and Pharisees, indeed, for the most part, and especially those who had wickedly invented the scandal that "he cast out devils by the prince of devils," their *eye* had always been *evil* and had excluded all light on the subject of the Divine mission of our Lord; but great numbers of the people had admitted the light, and for a time rejoiced to walk in it. They were, however, in great danger lest the artifices of the Pharisees, and their wicked sophisms, operating upon Jewish and worldly prejudices, should lead them back to unbelief; and as to many this occurred.—Thus their mental *eye*, at first *single* or sound, became *evil* or diseased, and the light within them faded into total, remediless darkness.—This appears to be the connection of these passages, first delivered in the sermon on the mount, but now applied to a particular occasion; and the lesson they teach as to the inevitable and necessary connection between religious error and a bad state of heart is admonitory to all, and assuredly in direct opposition to modern opinion as to the innocence of error in matters of religion, and the passiveness of the mind under evidence.—Evidence no more produces conviction in matters where the affections have their strong aversions or desires, than light falling upon the eye produces vision. If vision is produced there must be not only light, but a fit condition of the organ of seeing to receive it; and so as to religious truth, if bad passions and carnal affections, and other evils, sensual or mental, be suffered to predominate, conviction will be arrested or weakened, and the strongest light still leave us grovelling in darkness. A beautiful passage follows, in which, however, the critics can see only a tautology, which they have endeavoured by various means to remedy, but without satisfying themselves. This is the confession of Koinoel and others; some of whom, rather than suspect themselves, have suspected the passage to be a marginal gloss, although against all evidence. *If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle*, or lamp, *doth give thee light.* Nothing can be more obvious or more striking than the meaning The comparison is of the understanding, under the emblem of the chamber of vision behind the eye, to a room lighted by a bright lamp; *if then*, says our Lord, *thy whole body be φωτεινον, illuminated*, by the transmission of the rays of light through a sound eye; *having no part σκοτεινον, dark;* then *the whole shall be* fully and effectually *enlightened*, to all purposes of comfort, and usefulness, and safety, as when a lamp enlightens the *τη αστραπη, by its bright or sparkling flame.* Here surely is no tautology. The promise simply is, that if we keep our minds honestly open to conviction, we shall be as fully illuminated with truth, as a room is filled with the light of a brilliant and well-trimmed lamp.

Verse 37. *A certain Pharisee.*—This man was probably impressed with what he heard, and might invite our Lord to dine out of a friendly feeling. Many Pharisees, however, appear to have been present with malicious design, which gave occasion to our Lord to address to them, in the hearing and for the benefit of his host, and probably many others not of this deceitful sect, the reproofs which follow.

Verse 38. *That he had not first washed.*—See the note on Mark vii, 4. They wondered that he had not first washed or *baptized.* This means the washing or baptizing the hands up to the elbow, which might be

marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 [i] And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 *Ye* fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things * as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

[i] Matt. xxiii, 25.

* Or, *as you are able.*

either by immersing them, or having water poured over them by the attendants. As this was not done with reference to cleanliness, but superstition, our Lord did not sanction the practice by his example. At this the Pharisee wondered, having been accustomed to associate this act with his idea of superior sanctity.

Verse 39. *Now do ye Pharisees make clean, &c.*—The *νυν, now*, here signifies *at the present time*, at your meals; as, Now you are particular as to cleansing the body from supposed defilement, which is but as *the outside of the cup or dish*, and you rest there. Your purifications go not beyond the exterior, *but your inward part is full of ravening*, plunder; that is, the desire of plunder, extortion, oppression, and covetousness, the great vices of the sect, *and wickedness*, of various kinds.

Verse 40. *Ye fools.*—A term not of angry reproach, but of a reproving description; *αφρονες*, men without discernment and understanding, although professed doctors of the law.

Did not he that made that which is without, &c.—Some take *ποιησας* in the sense of *purifies*; and so the sense will be, "Whoever washes a cup or platter, but washes the inside as well as the outside?" And, indeed, *ποιεω* may answer to the Hebrew, עשׂה, to beautify and cleanse; but the interpretation is frigid, and is scarcely allowed by the tense of the verb. The *το εξωθεν* is better understood of the body, and *το εσωθεν* of the mind. Indeed, in any other view, the force of the charge of want of discernment, in these pretended wise men, is not apparent. There must be implied in it the want of attention to some obvious truth which ought to have been kept before them; and that truth the words of our Lord, rightly interpreted, express: *Did not he that made the outward man*, the body, *also make the inward man*, the soul? And thus the reproof comes home to them in all its force. They were scrupulously careful to purify the body, as a RELIGIOUS ACT, out of respect to God, its maker, and their relation to him as creatures; and they therefore stood condemned by that very act, for neglecting the purification of the soul, which was equally God's workmanship, and the higher and nobler part of man's nature. Every true religious act of purification must therefore begin at the heart.

Verse 41. *But rather give alms of such things as ye have.*—The phrase *τα ενοντα*, rendered by us *of such things as ye have*, has occasioned a good deal of discussion from its ambiguity. It has been rendered *the things which are in them*; give that which the dishes contain in alms, rather than be solicitous about cleansing the outside of them: but not to urge that our Lord is only speaking figuratively in the preceding verse, of the cleansing of *cups and platters*, the sense thus given to the passage is directly contrary to Christ's whole doctrine; for it makes him say that giving alms of that luxury which is obtained by extortion and rapine would *cleanse* the remainder. Our Lord never thus sanctifies robbery and hypocrisy; nor does he ever teach that almsgiving alone can make us stand clear and accepted with God, however righteously we may have become possessed of what we give. Dr. Owen's interpretation is ingenious: "As *το εξωθεν* plainly relates to the body, and *το εσωθεν* to the mind; so I am apt to think that *τα ενονλα* must here mean *right inward principles*, and that the sense of the whole is to this purpose: *πλην, contrary to* what you now do, purify your hearts, rectify your dispositions, make clean all within, give alms from right motives, and, behold all things are clean to you." This would be paralleled by the sentiment of St. Paul, "To the pure all things are pure." But the sense of the ancient commentators, adopted by Grotius, Rosenmuller, and Schleusner, is to be preferred, *but give alms according to your ability*, or substance, *καΐα* being understood before *τα ενονλα*. This agrees with the Syriac version, and is confirmed by the reason of the case; for he who gives acceptable alms must not only give what is his own, not spoil and robbery, but he must give in proportion as God hath prospered him.

And, behold, all things are clean unto you.—The Jews use the word זכה, which signifies *to be clean*, for giving alms. The Arabic and Syriac word for alms has this sense also; and it is upon this double meaning that our Lord's remark is founded. Not that he confines himself to almsgiving merely; for we know that he attached no greater importance to that than to any other moral duty. It is also to be well remembered, that he never separates one duty from another, as if any

42 But wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 [k] Wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them*.

45 ¶ Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46 [l] And he said, Wo unto you also, *ye* lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 [m] Wo unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute.

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 [n] From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished be-

[k] Matt. xxiii, 6.—[l] Matt. xxiii, 4.

[m] Matt. xxiii, 29.—[n] Gen. iv, 8.

single duty would be rightly performed unless all others were performed also. The contrary is his doctrine; for he regards no outward act but as it expresses a right state of the heart, both to God and our neighbour; and when the heart is thus right, it must bring forth "good things out of its good treasure," or, in other words, it must practise universal holiness. Almsgiving is therefore adduced by our Lord as one branch of practical piety; not exclusive of, but a specimen of all other duties; and he teaches that those who lead a godly and charitable life need be under no anxiety as to bodily purifications and baptisms, but that to them all things are clean, so that by nothing but by sin can they be defiled before God. The giving of alms was probably selected as an instance of practical piety, because the discourse concerned the washing of hands before meat; and the hands being the members employed in the distribution of alms, Christ shows them a more excellent way of purifying their hands, than by unnecessarily and superstitiously laving them with water.

Verse 42. *Ye tithe mint and rue.*—Matthew says, "Mint, anise, and cummin;" which variation, and others in these woes pronounced against the Pharisees, though in substance the same as those recorded by St. Matthew, were uttered on a different occasion, and at a different place. See the note on Matt. xxiii, 23.

Verse 43. *Ye love the uppermost seats, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xxiii, 6, 7.

Verse 44. *As graves that appear not.*—The metaphor in Matthew xxiii, 27 is different. It is there taken from the painted and ornamented sepulchres, which are contrasted with the corruption within. Both similitudes are striking, but they are distinct, and convey a different sense. The former contrasts the rottenness within with the beautiful appearance without: the other refers to the manner in which the Pharisees succeeded in hiding their real character; so that, as men coming unawares upon an unapparent grave were, according to Jewish notions, defiled; those who, not being acquainted with the real wickedness of the Pharisees, were drawn into an acquaintance with them, which speedily seduced and corrupted them also.

Verse 45. *One of the lawyers.*—Some have argued from this apparent distinction between the scribes and Pharisees and the lawyers, *νομικοι*, that the latter were private teachers of the law, the scribes the public expounders; or that the scribes were of the sect of the Pharisees, the lawyers of the sect of the Sadducees; or that the scribes were interpreters of the law, the lawyers of the traditions. But the comparison of this with the former verse will show that the scribes and lawyers are the same class. Previously, our Lord had only pronounced his woes against the Pharisees, but in verse 44 he joins the scribes with them; which led the *lawyer* to say, *Master, thus saying, thou reproachest* us *also.*

Verse 46. *Lade men with burdens.*—See note on Matt. xxiii, 4.

Verse 47. *Sepulchres of the prophets, &c.*—See notes on Matt. xxiii, 29–31.

Verse 49. *Said the wisdom of God, &c.*—In the parallel place in St. Matthew, our Lord speaks in his own person, "Behold, I sent unto you," &c. He must here therefore style himself *the wisdom of God;* or, if this phrase is a periphrasis for the *wise God,* we have a direct assumption of divinity. See the note on Matt. xxiii, 34.

Verses 50, 51. *That the blood, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. xxiii, 35, 36.

tween the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 ° Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye * hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

° Matt. xxiii, 13.

* Or, *forbade.*

Verse 52. *The key of knowledge.*—Those who were made doctors of the law had a key given to them at their ordination or appointment, which they always afterward wore as a badge of their office. Thus emblematically did they profess to open the true meaning of the law and the prophets. Had they done that faithfully, they would have prepared men to receive Christ and his doctrine; but by their corrupt and carnal interpretation they wholly took away *the key of knowledge*, kept shut, instead of opening, the sacred volume, of which they professed to be the expounders, and thus entered not into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and hindered those *that were entering*, by their false expositions of those scriptures especially which related to the Messiah. This is the crime of the Jewish rabbins, or expositors of the law, to this day.

Verse 53. *To provoke him to speak.*—By captious questions, by vehement objections, by perverting what he had said already, and, no doubt, by railing language. Their object was to throw him off his guard, to incite him αποστοματιζειν, to speak without premeditation or caution; *lying in wait* like beasts of prey, and *seeking to catch something out of his mouth*, being ready to spring upon any unguarded word, and seize it, that they might have to accuse him, and put him to death. But our Lord had a perfect self-command; and as his wisdom confounded, so his prudences baffled, all his enemies, and that without any sacrifice of ministerial fidelity. The style of St. Luke, in these last verses, is greatly to be admired. Vigour, fitness of metaphor, and graphic power, are here all united. The scene is brought before us in the most lively manner, and a painter might find a noble subject in the calm reproving attitude of our Lord, and in the cunning malignity of the group of Pharisees, who *vehemently urged him, to provoke him to speak* unadvisedly, *lying in wait*; eagerly watching the success of every manœuvre.

CHAPTER XII.

1 Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine: 13 warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. 22 We must not be over careful of earthly things, 31 but seek the kingdom of God, 33 give alms, 36 be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whensoever he cometh. 41 Christ's ministers are to see to their charge, 49 and look for persecution. 54 The people must take this time of grace, 58 because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.

1 In [a] the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto

[a] St. Matthew, chap. xvi, 6.

CHAPTER XII. Verse 1. *Unto his disciples first of all.*—Whether the Pharisees mentioned in the preceding chapter were present on this occasion, or being disappointed had retired, does not appear. The multitude, however, had increased; and having witnessed his triumph over his opponents, they so crowd around him to get near to catch his words, that *they trod upon each other.* To them, however, he did not address himself, but, as his manner frequently was, to his disciples. So he delivered the sermon on the mount, and other discourses; which explains why there should be passages in them of general application, and others applicable to disciples only.

Which is hypocrisy.—On other occasions our Lord had cautioned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees generally; here against the leaven of the Pharisees in particular, which he declares to be *hypocrisy.* They covered themselves as with a mask; they personated, as the word imports, characters which they were not; they affected devotion, but were without its spirit; religious zeal, but it was for their own peculiarities, not for God's honour; ostentatious almsgiving, without pity for the

his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 [b] For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house tops.

4 [c] And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two * farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 [d] Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

[b] Matt. x, 26.—[c] Matt. x, 28.

* See Matt. x, 29.—[d] Matt. x, 32; 2 Tim. ii, 12.

poor; and sanctity, without moral honesty. This corrupting *leaven* of *hypocrisy*, the disciples of Christ are cautioned against. It is therefore enjoined upon us to be perfectly HONEST in matters of religion, to turn with all our HEARTS to God, and to follow our Saviour in all INTEGRITY of purpose and practice; not, indeed, as some would say, to avoid all professions of entire devotedness to him, lest we should fall into hypocrisy, but keeping up the heart to that profession, which as Christians we are bound to make, that we may be always before God what we appear before men. The assumption of any particular virtue to carry a point of selfishness either of opinion, honour, or interest, is a violation of truth which falls under this condemnation of hypocrisy. All approaches to this worst of vices ought to be guarded against, because, as *leaven*, its inevitable tendency is to spread over and infect the whole character. This caution is enforced by the most solemn considerations. What is *covered* shall be *revealed*, every hypocrite shall be unmasked; what is *spoken in darkness* by hypocrites, banded together to accomplish their designs, shall *be heard in the light*; and what is *whispered in the ear*, even *in closets*, for greater secrecy, shall be *proclaimed upon the house tops*; the tops of buildings being used for declaring public tidings or proclaiming laws. This revelation of hypocritical characters, and insidious designs, often takes place on earth, to the shame and confusion of the guilty; but the ultimate reference of the words is to the day of judgment. Then God shall judge "the secrets of men's hearts;" and "every secret thing" shall be brought into light and manifestation. The hypocrisy of religious persecutors of all ages shall be then especially exposed and punished. See the note on Matt. x, 27.

Verse 4. *Be not afraid of them that kill the body.*—See the note on Matt. x, 28.

Verse 6. *Two farthings.*—The ασσαριον, or farthing, was a brass coin of the value of one tenth of a *denarius* or Roman penny, consequently equal to about three farthings of our money. In the parallel passage in Matthew it is, "And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."—Here the same words in substance are spoken on a different occasion, and the expression is beautifully varied,—*and not one of them is forgotten before God.* The wants, dangers, and true relations of every creature, however small, are always remembered by God, who regulates his government of all things accordingly; nothing is FORGOTTEN as to time, place, or order. Could the perfection of government be more strongly expressed? Could a stronger ground of confidence in God be laid, to encourage the trust of those who are *of more value than many sparrows?*

Verse 7. *But even the very hairs of your head.*—See the note on Matt. x, 30.

Verse 8. *Confess me before men.*—See the note on Matt. x, 32. To which may be added, that to confess Christ includes the following particulars:—1. Public union with his Church, so that we bear his name. 2. Regular participation of the Lord's Supper, by which "we show forth his death until he come;" that is, not only declare the historical fact, but confess our trust in it as the grand sacrifice for sin. 3. Regular attendance, when able, upon public worship, especially upon the Christian Sabbath, which is "the Lord's day," the day on which his praises are celebrated by the Church universal, and his Gospel proclaimed in their assemblies. 4. Submitting to reproach, loss, and suffering, when we might avoid them by complying with something contrary to the will of Christ, or ceasing to do what he has enjoined. This is to confess Christ before men, because it is a most unequivocal declaration that we prefer obeying him with cheerful affection to any immediate interest of our own. 5. To confess Christ is to show,

9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

11 [e] And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

13 ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

[e] St. Matthew, chap. x, 19.

without affectation or constraint, by the spirit and character of our social conversation, and habitual conduct, that we have a constant respect to his glory and the laws of his religion, that we delight in them, that we have given up ourselves to their influence, and that we walk as in the presence of our Master. To all such persons Christ promises a public acknowledgment *before the angels of God*, referring, no doubt, to his second coming. This acknowledgment will, doubtless, be a solemn act in the presence of the assembled angels, that all orders of intelligent holy beings may know the grounds of the Divine procedure at that great day,—a circumstance which will minister more than we can conceive to their instruction, and perhaps future safety; since the wonderful discoveries of good and evil which that day will make, and the rewards and punishments of infinite variety which will be assigned, will form such a manifestation of God, in his government of creatures, as has never before taken place, and must be remembered with awe and joy to all eternity. But previous to the final act of acknowledgment before the throne, there will be a distinguishing recognition. The angels of God will be the instruments of gathering together the elect from the four winds of heaven; they rise *first*, so that they are thus acknowledged to be the "dead in Christ," them that "sleep in Jesus," before the angels on that occasion become their willing and joyful ministers. On the other hand, *to deny Christ*, as it is spoken of those who profess to be his disciples, must include, 1. Open apostacy from his religion; or, 2. The neglect of all those things by which Christ is confessed, as public worship, and receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; or, 3. A denying him "in works," that is, throwing off his authority in our conversation and conduct, so as not to be habitually controlled by it; or, 4. A cowardly desertion of duty to avoid reproach, loss, or suffering; for then we deny Christ by acting as though we belonged to another master; or, 5. Hearing his truth and religion assaulted, and defamed, in guilty silence. All such persons would give worlds, indeed, to be acknowledged to be Christ's disciples, in that great day of final decision to which he refers; but they shall be denied and rejected. Let the undecided meditate on this solemn subject.

Verse 11. *Magistrates and powers.*—Rulers of every rank, and εξουσιας, persons having authority over others. See the note on Matt. x, 19.

Verses 13, 14. *Master, speak to my brother, &c.*—Here Christ was applied to as an arbitrator in a civil cause, or, in other words, to assume the judicial function. This he promptly declines. He had neither been appointed to it by human authority, to which in such cases, he paid all respect, nor was it any part of the office assigned him by immediate appointment from God. *Who made me a judge and divider over you?* The division of inheritances, of which the first-born had a right to a double share, but no more, when it could not be satisfactorily settled among brethren and relatives, was referred to the council of three judges, who either decided themselves, or appointed an arbitrator and divider; hence our Lord uses two terms, *judge*, δικαστης, and μεριστης, *divider*; the one meaning a publicly appointed judge, as one of the council of three; the other, the person appointed by them with full powers to make the partition. The latter is, however, understood by many as exegetical of the former. Nothing more strikingly shows that our Lord's kingdom was not to be of this world. Had he been an earthly king, there was no reason why he might not have filled the office of judge in civil matters. But he declines; not indeed from mere prudence, lest he should offend, or lest he should be too precipitate in setting up his claims, but from want of authority. He had no commission from man or God for these earthly offices; and it followed, therefore, that only in a spiritual sense and for spiritual ends was he invested with the authority which he possessed. From this instance we are not to infer that Christians are to decline to be umpires or arbitrators, to prevent suits at law by a more amicable and less expensive settlement of affairs; for, had it been in that character only that our Lord had been applied to, he might probably have interposed.

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

But he was asked to do, by virtue of his being a prophet, what belonged to the regular judicial office, and so implied an assumption of that civil authority which he uniformly disclaimed.

Verse 15. *Take heed, and beware of covetousness, &c.*—Our Lord took occasion, from the request which had been just made, to guard against covetousness, and especially because of its tendency to turn the desires from things of eternal interest. This was illustrated by the case of the person who had requested him to interpose, that he might obtain his civil rights. Here was a Teacher sent from God, one whom many acknowledged to be an extraordinary prophet; and some, the Messiah himself; and yet this man does not avail himself of his presence to know what he must do to be saved, but applies to him to undertake to put him in possession of his share of an inheritance,—a sufficient proof that his sordid soul was wholly absorbed in earthly interests. And this will farther show us what our Lord here means by covetousness. Not the wicked desire of acquiring what belonged to another; for by the Mosaic law he had a right to his share of the inheritance, and there is no intimation that he desired more than his share; nor does covetousness here and in other parts of Scripture mean the hoarding up of wealth, so as to refuse to apportion that degree of it which duty requires to be expended and given away. This is the desire of keeping; but covetousness includes the desire of having, of increasing wealth even when there is no design to sink into churlishness and illiberality. And the great rule by which this *studium habendi*, this criminal and dangerous desire of gain, is ascertained to exist, is, when it prevents us from applying with our whole heart to the work of our salvation. For then the worldly desires extinguish or render inefficient spiritual ones; prayer is restrained, or languid and powerless; and those words of St. John become applicable to our case, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." To guard us against this sin,—a sin which does not alarm like obvious immoralities, which puts itself under even virtuous disguises of prudence and diligence, and which, therefore, often steals upon men unawares,—the solemn parable which follows was spoken.—The moral which the parable was designed to illustrate is, that *a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.* Those who think that these words merely signify that riches have no power to secure a long life, not only ascribe a very trite and an almost useless remark to our Lord, unworthy of his wisdom; but fail entirely to show that the parable illustrates that sentiment, beyond the bare fact that a rich man suddenly and prematurely dies; while many of its most striking circumstances are, in that view, quite superfluous and irrelevant. Nor does it come up to our Lord's meaning, to take *life*, as Schleusner, Kuinoel, and others, in the sense of *happiness;* as if Christ had said, "For a man's happiness depends not on his riches;" for surely that is a truth very easy to be shown by many other considerations than that the opulent, like others, are liable to sudden death; and indeed the answer to so imperfect a view of the subject would be, "They are at least happy in their riches so long as they live." These and several other interpretations are frigid and trifling, and only show how often the learned, if not themselves spiritual men, pass over, without discernment, the most weighty and important lessons of holy writ. By LIFE our Lord obviously means men's true INTEREST; and *that* he teaches us, consists not in worldly abundance, but in being *rich toward God*, or, *in respect to God;* that is, *spiritually rich*, endowed with those things which form the treasure of the soul, and will remain its treasure after death. Of this great truth the parable is a solemnly impressive illustration.

Verse 16. *The ground.*—Χωρα, the same as αγρος, the land owned and cultivated by himself; for he is designated as already a rich man.

Verse 17. *And he thought within himself, &c.*—This opens his character. He is full of thoughts and plans; the very increase of his wealth, through the extraordinary fertility of the season, fills him with anxiety, but in the midst of all that he *thought within himself:* he thought not thankfully of God, the giver; he thought not of himself as the accountable steward of a superior Lord; he thought not of the interests of his spiritual and immortal nature; and though he thought of future life, he thought of it as certain, not uncertain, and as a scene of sensual enjoyment, not of holy useful works and diligent

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night * thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, † Take no

* Greek, *do they require thy soul.*

† Matt. vi, 25.

preparation for eternity. We have therefore the complete picture of a prosperous man of the world, living without regard to God.

Verses 19–21. *And I will say to my soul, &c.*—This is truly epicurean. When the easy and temporary work of providing places in which he might deposit an overflowing wealth was completed, he resolved to discharge his cares, summon his soul from a vigorous application to the gaining of wealth, to its enjoyment in ease, mirth, and luxury. So he resolved to say and act in future; but God said, *Thou fool, αφρον, this night thy soul*, which thou hast resolved to summon to surrender itself to ease and low gratifications, *shall be required of thee;* literally, *they require*, or, *shall require.* This form of speech gives some sanction to the opinion of the Jews, that good angels convey the departed spirits of the just to paradise, and evil angels bear away the souls of the wicked to torment. Certainly there is nothing in their notions contrary to Scripture; though whether they are taught there may be doubted. The plural verb in this passage may be used impersonally, an instance of which occurs in the 48th verse of this chapter. Death is here spoken of as requiring back a loan.—This is in the manner of the Jews, and conveys a striking thought. So in the Wisdom of Solomon, xv, 8, we have, "When his life, which was lent him, shall be demanded,"—the same verb being used as in the text. The continuance of the soul in connection with the body is the continuance of life; their separation is death. So long as the soul remains in the body, life is lent us that we may apply it to the great purposes for which it is dispensed; but at death the loan is demanded back, and the soul is summoned to answer for the use made of it.

Then whose shall those things be? &c.—This question is asked to mark the more strongly the poverty of the man reputed rich. What he had he was about to lose: his wealth was about to pass into unknown hands; or, if known, this mitigated not the case,—it was to drop suddenly from his own: and yet, when stripped of the world, *not being rich in respect of God*, he had no treasure laid up above, no part in the inheritance of heaven, no provision made for judgment and eternity. Here was poverty indeed! Some understand being *rich toward God* to signify abundant in works of charity to others, and thus to stand in opposition to laying up *treasure for himself*, for his own use and enjoyment; and doubtless this species of good works is included in those habits by which a man becomes rich, and provides for his felicity in a future life. But the true antitheses in verse 21 are the laying up earthly treasures, and the securing heavenly riches; between caring for the body and caring for the soul; between sensuality and spirituality; and between a presumptuous dependence upon life and a wise regard to its uncertainty leading to a holy preparation for it.

Several of the most important theological points of doctrine are contained in this admonitory parable. It teaches especially 1. That the end of the present life is preparation for a future. 2. That we are to estimate the value of things by the manner in which they relate to our whole being, and not as they promote a temporary and present advantage. 3. That the true riches of men are moral, and consist in all which secures the favour of God in time and eternity. Of these the Holy Scriptures only inform us. Plato could distinguish between moral gold and silver, and Divine; and others could speak of the riches of the soul; but the minds of those great writers could never conceive what our Saviour expresses by being *rich in respect of God*, in the grace he imparts, in the friendship which he bestows, and in the heaven which he prepares for the faithful. 4. That man is accountable; and death the requirement of his soul, in order that he may give account. 5. That the soul is immortal, something distinct from the body, and shall survive it; for by the *soul* here is not meant animal life, as some vainly interpret, but the thinking principle in man, that very soul which, in the 19th verse, this rich voluptuary addresses, and calls to lay aside its cares and anxieties, and to surrender itself to ease, and to those enjoyments of which it is capable through the gratified senses of the body. And that this soul was required for judgment and punishment, appears from this, that it is declared to be the folly of this worldly man that he had lived so as not to be *rich toward God*, the evil of which could to him be only felt in that future state where that awful moral poverty would be fully revealed, and the neglect of religion in this life fully punished.

Verse 22. *Therefore I say unto you, Take*

thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,* neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 ¶ But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; [g] provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth

* Or, *live not in careful suspense.*

[g] Matt. vi, 20.

no thought, &c.—Our Lord takes occasion to attach to this parable several passages of his sermon on the mount, all of which teach lessons, for which it is admirably adapted to prepare the mind. See the notes on Matt. vi, 25–33. In verse 29 there is a variation in the expression, *Neither be ye of a doubtful mind.* The word μετεωρίζεσθαι signifies to be raised into the air as clouds, or birds, driven uncertainly by the winds; or upon the waves of the sea, as ships tossed in a swell of the ocean; hence it comes to be used for the fluctuations of a mind produced by doubt and uncertainty. Against this we are exhorted. We are to have so steadfast a faith in the providence of our heavenly Father as to be assured that we shall never be left destitute of his care, and therefore not to perplex ourselves as to the future. Bulkely has adduced here a happy illustration: "In Statius, it is the character of his friend Pollius, that he had such a superiority to fortune, and all outward things, that his last day would not find him in suspense and perturbation of mind about any thing of this sort, but ready to go.

—Dubio quem non in turbine rerum
Deprendet suprema dies, sed sibire paratum."

Verse 32. *Fear not, little flock, &c.*—By calling his disciples a flock, he professed to be their shepherd, and thus added another motive to trust, by the assurance that they should lack no supplies. They would naturally think of the words of the sweet singer of their own Israel, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." By adding, *It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, the argument was still more strengthened; for if the kingdom, meaning the kingdom of grace and glory, the blessings of the Church in both worlds, be given, the smaller gifts, when consistent with their higher interests, could not be withheld. But at the same time, amidst all these promises of caring for our temporal necessities, he elevates our thoughts to higher blessings, even those of *the kingdom*, his own kingdom which he came into the world to establish, and which he rose to heaven to administer. To give this kingdom is said to be the Father's *good pleasure*, that is, *his will, purpose*, and *appointment*, as the word in this construction signifies. The grace and kindness are to be concluded rather from the act than from the word used, though some have laid much stress upon it. *To give* the kingdom signifies the entire concurrence of the Father in the work of Christ, and his acceptance of it; his sealing and confirming every act of grace, and becoming a willing and rejoicing party to the administration of eternal glory to Christ's true disciples, in completion of that grand redeeming purpose which sprung from his own eternal and infinite love.

Verse 33. *Sell that ye have, and give alms.*—If this be understood as spoken to all Christ's disciples, it must be understood comparatively: Sell of what you have, a due and liberal portion of it; and be not like the rich man just mentioned, whose care was to hoard up all his fruits, and to provide for his own indulgence also. And it is more consistent with the whole scope of the discourse to interpret the command in this comparative sense, than by taking it strictly, to confine it wholly to the disciples then present. Nor did they understand it as an

not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 [h] Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall

[h] 1 Peter, chap. i, 13.

injunction to sell all they had; for the women who ministered to him of their substance do not appear to have sold their property; and though for a time after the resurrection the Church at Jerusalem had all things in common, what the rest parted with was not so much to give *alms* in the proper sense, as to provide a common stock in which all participated in a season of danger and persecution. Nor was this introduced into any other of the primitive Churches; which shows that it rested upon some peculiarity, and was not of general obligation; if indeed even at Jerusalem it was ever binding, or more than a spontaneous act. Farther, in the writings of the apostles to the Churches, we perceive the distinction of rich and poor, spoken of as permanent, and duties enjoined upon each. The precept is then to be understood as lying against that hoarding up of wealth which interferes with the duty of generous almsgiving. Hence it is enjoined to *sell*, because a great part of the treasure laid up in those times were goods of various kinds, as corn, fruits, spices, valuable unguents, and, to a large extent, vestments as well as money.

Bags.—Purses, which, by not growing old and decaying, hold and scatter not the treasure put into them.

A treasure in the heavens which faileth not.—A treasure which fails not, either by LOSS OR EXHAUSTION, secure and incapable of waste. The accidents to which such hoards as the Jews were accustomed to accumulate were liable are suggested by the allusion to the *thief* and the *moth:* the latter comprehends all those small insects which prey upon the corn and fruits in the granary, and upon garments in the wardrobe.

Verse 34. *For where your treasure, &c.*—See the note on Matt. vi, 21.

Verse 35. *Let your loins, &c.*—As the upper garment of the Asiatics is flowing, so was it necessary to confine it within the girdle when any one addressed himself to important service. Hence the adjective ενζωνος, *well girded*, signifies in Greek writers well prepared for any action, as fighting, running, serving, &c. In Hierocles we have it well turned to a moral sense: "This was the great end of the Pythagoric discipline, that men should be altogether on the wing toward a participation in Divine benefits, that so, when death comes, leaving upon earth the mortal body, and putting off its nature, *we may be properly girt for the heavenly march,* προς την ουρανιαν πορειαν ωσιν ενζωνοι." The disciples are here compared to servants waiting for the coming of their Lord, that is, of Christ, to judgment, which is a farther proof that our Lord is addressing his disciples generally, as well as those immediately about him. They are commanded therefore to be *girt*, that is, in perfect readiness for service. *And your lights burning.* Here the allusion is to the marriage ceremony. Their lord having gone to conduct his bride home, the servants here spoken of are those left in the house, to be ready to open to the nuptial train, upon the first signal, and to mingle their lights and acclamations with those of the attendants. See the notes on Matt. xxv, 1–13, where the same state of preparation for the coming of Christ is illustrated and enforced with a variety of circumstances and in a more extended parable; of which, however, the moral is in substance the same. The whole teaches us to live in readiness for death and for judgment; and to acquire and cultivate those habits which will prepare us to enter at once upon the higher and nobler services of our blessed Master in another state of being.

Verse 37. *That he shall gird himself.*—This is one of the most extraordinary promises of the New Testament. The blessedness of Christ's servants is represented, not merely by their serving Christ in the heavenly state, but his serving them! Grotius, Whitby, and others have referred for illustrations to the far-fetched and inapposite examples of the Roman Saturnalia, the Cretan Hermæa, and the Babylonian Saccas, when the servants sat at table, and were waited upon by their masters. But the true illustration lay much nearer at hand. It was customary in ancient times for the host to do honour to distinguished guests, by performing some services, on ordinary occasions done by servants; after which he might sit down in his own place: and we see that, not only when our Lord was entertained at Martha's own house, she, the hostess, *served;* but that when he dined at the house of Simon the leper, six days before the passover, whose residence was at Bethany, and a neighbour to Martha, it is said that "Mar-

gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 [i] And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken:

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will * cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*,

[i] Matt. xxiv, 43.

* Or, *cut him off.*

tha served," doubtless in honour of the guest. So our Lord tacitly reproves Simon the Pharisee with having given him no water to wash his feet, which had been a mark of respect shown to him by others who had intended to receive him with honour and affection. The import of the promise, therefore, is, that their Lord would not treat them in that heavenly state as even favoured servants; but as chosen guests, to whom he would show marks of peculiar love and honour. Christ will, in fact, SERVE his faithful *servants* for ever; as he ministers grace, so will he delight to minister the honours, the blessedness, and the rewards of his kingdom; and that with a condescension which shall stoop to the meanest and most unnoticed by the world, who have served him in any line of duty with zealous affection.—He will select the most laborious, persevering, and watchful servants for singular honour.

Verse 38. *And if he shall come in the second watch.*—The second watch was nine o'clock in the evening; and a watch being three hours long, the third was twelve. That the marriage processions were so long delayed as midnight, is not probable; but the great duty of watchfulness was impressed by Christ upon his disciples from the uncertain time of his coming. Even should his coming be delayed, should the time of our death, the time of any threatened national calamity, the time of the final advent, be postponed beyond our calculations, the solemn lesson is, BE VIGILANT. In other words, we are always to remember that our Lord will come and call us to account; and that this accountability of ours is a most solemn and momentous reality.

Verse 39. *If the good man of the house.*—See the note on Matt. xxiv, 43, 44.

Verse 41. *Unto us, or even to all.*—Our Lord, according to his frequent custom, was addressing his disciples in the presence of the multitude. On some occasions he speaks directly to the people, on others to the disciples alone; but often to the latter, while the others stand by. In the last case, the discourse is so constructed as to teach the multitude through the lessons enjoined upon the disciples; but sometimes the words spoken have more special reference to the disciples than to any other. This should be remembered, in order the better to interpret many parts of the discourses of our Lord which were so delivered. The sermon on the mount thus derives considerable illustration. It shows also the reason of Peter's question, *Speakest thou this parable*, respecting watching, *unto us* exclusively, *or even unto all?* This question our Lord does not answer, but immediately proceeds with another parable, evidently and wholly applicable to them and to all ministers; from which we may conclude that the former was addressed to all, but though generally expressed, still with special reference to those in the sacred office.

Verse 42. *That faithful and wise steward.*—See the notes on Matt. xxiv, 45–51. He who is called in Matthew by the general name *servant*, is here designated as οἰκονόμος, *a steward*, a house steward, who, in large families, had not only considerable authority, but distributed the allotted portions of food to the servants, the grain, &c., which they cooked for themselves.

Verse 47. *And the servant which knew his Lord's will, &c.*—The object of this passage is to impress, in the strongest manner,

neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

49 ¶ I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

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upon all the practical application of the instructions they had received, by assuring them that, though the government be merciful, it is also just: they were now among fully instructed servants, and are thus warned, *And that servant who knew the will of his master, and prepared not himself*, held not himself ready for every kind of service, and was actually disobedient to the commands laid upon him, shall *be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not.* This is not to be taken absolutely, but comparatively; he that knew not so fully his Lord's will, who had not received instructions so explicit. We must suppose some general knowledge, or there would be no pretence for inflicting stripes at all. 1. The intention was to teach that, in inflicting *many stripes*, God does not act arbitrarily, but with deliberative justice, since where the offence is less, the punishment is milder; so that from this proof of the calm judicial character of Christ's administration before us, we may be fully guarded against all carelessness and presumption. 2. To lay down this important axiom of God's moral government, which we ought never to forget, and with which every new privilege and blessing conferred upon us ought to impress us the more deeply, *that from him to whom much is given, much shall be required.*

Verses 49, 50. *I am come to send fire upon earth, &c.*—Most commentators take this to refer to the persecutions and dissensions of which the propagation of Christ's religion would prove the innocent cause. For this, however, there appear no better reasons than that such dissensions are mentioned a few verses lower down; and that fire, which is used as an emblem of many other things, is also used as an emblem of dissension and violence. No doubt, also, this interpretation has been aided by the common interpretation of the next verse; which, however, appears to be equally erroneous.

It is a fatal objection to the notion, that by *fire*, in this place, Christ means persecutions and divisions, that the kindling of it is made the object of his most earnest wish. *I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, ει ηδη ανηφθη, but that it were already kindled;* for ει often expresses a wish, as "If thou hadst known," for, "O that thou hadst known!" The phrase may be turned several ways; but in all, an eager anticipation or a strong desire must be understood, or no consistent sense can be given to the words. Now surely no reason can be given why our Lord should strongly wish for the instant kindling of that fire of persecution and dissension which should "divide a house against itself, and set three against two, and two against three." Such dissensions indeed he predicted would be the result of his ministry, but could, in no degree, long for them, as though impatient for their arrival; the precise emotion which the text indicates.—The *fire* therefore must be understood of the FIRE OF HIS WORD, a figure of speech not strange to the Jews, because found several times in the Old Testament, and by our Lord most aptly applied to his own Gospel in its full and perfect revelation, which took place at the day of pentecost, and was accompanied by the descent of the Spirit "in cloven tongues as of fire," emblematical of the intense power, the purifying, testing, and consuming qualities of Christianity; its power being discovered in all these respects, in purging men from vice, in bringing every thing to the test of an infallible standard, and revealing its good or its evil, and in its mightily destructive tendency as to all things contrary to itself. The last has, in all ages, been confessed by the attempts made ever since its introduction to escape from, or to extinguish its light and influence, when any corruption in religion or society at large was to be spared or encouraged. *To send* this holy *fire abroad upon earth* was the very object of our Lord's mission; and from the fulness of his benevolence he expresses his earnest wish that it were *already kindled*, and all its blessings fully bestowed on men. But he adds, *I have a baptism to be baptized with;* I must be baptized with blood, before I can "baptize with fire;" *and how am I straitened*, confined, restrained, from the giving of the most excellent gifts I came to impart, "from baptizing with the Holy Ghost and fire," to which I am appointed, from the full revelation of truth to my disciples and to the world, *until that baptism is accomplished!* A metaphorical signification of συνεχομαι is preferred by many, because it best agrees with the sense they would put upon the text, which is an undefinable, distressful longing for the accomplishment of his death, as though he were almost impatient to get through an inevitable appointment, and know the worst of the case. This scarcely consists with the perfect patience ascribed to our Lord; nor could the avowal of it apparently teach any important lesson. Where-

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I * straitened till it be accomplished!

51 [k] Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, [l] When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when *ye see* the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 *Ye* hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 ¶ [m] When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he

* Or, *pained*.—[k] Matt. x, 34.

[l] Matt. xvi, 2.—[m] Matt. v, 25.

as, nothing is more natural than that our Lord should feel himself restrained and confined, in giving his instructions, by the necessity arising out of his unaccomplished death, that much of truth should be veiled in parable, and much postponed; and nothing more consistent with his character than that he, "the Sun of righteousness," now under a cloud, should long to break forth upon his disciples and the nations "with healing in his wings," while yet he was restrained.—And the lesson, too, is highly important. We are taught that Christianity, as a revelation, was not perfected until after he had sent his *fire upon the earth*, the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles; and that we must connect THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE with his own, as contained in the EVANGELISTS, in order to have THE WHOLE EFFICIENT GOSPEL. Socinians and others are fond of confining their attention chiefly to the gospels, and neglecting the epistles: the reason is, that when the whole Gospel was revealed, and the light of pentecost thrown upon the previous discourses of our Lord, those doctrines are unequivocally found there which before the death of Christ, and the key afforded by that to his own words, could only be generally and figuratively expressed. Here our Lord explains the whole case: the fire could not be fully kindled upon earth until he had gone through the baptism of his sufferings; in other words, he must accomplish a sacrificial death, in order to give light and life to the world, and by the full knowledge of that character and peculiarity of his death alone could his doctrine be fully understood.

Verse 51. *Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on earth?*—Here an entirely different subject is introduced; though it takes its rise from the former. I am indeed come to send fire upon earth, the illuminating, purifying influences of heavenly truth; but suppose ye that I am come only to send blessings, that *peace* only will be the result? *I tell you, Nay; but*, through the perverseness of men, and in opposition to my intention, and in despite of my authority and doctrine, *rather division*. This appears to be the true connection. See the note on Matt. x, 34.

Verse 55. *There will be heat.*—The heat which is produced by the blowing of the south wind in Judea is very oppressive.

Verse 56. *Face of the sky and earth.*—The Jews paid great attention to the indications of weather; and their wise men abounded with rules for prognosticating it from the different aspects of the *sky and the earth*, that is, from the appearance of the atmosphere, and whether affecting the face of the sky or that of the earth. Their skill in this respect arose from their attention to the subject; and if they had exercised the same attention to the evidences of Christ's mission, they would have discovered that *this time* was "the acceptable time" spoken of by the prophet, and "the day of salvation." For their diligent attention to matters of so little comparative moment as the kind of weather which should come on the morrow, and their carelessness to a subject of the highest import, they are here reproved as *hypocrites*, persons pretending to have extraordinary desires for the appearance of Messiah, and yet neglecting to investigate the *signs* of his coming.

Verse 57. *Yea, and why even of yourselves?*—Independent of signs and wonders, why do ye not *of yourselves*, from comparing in your minds the doctrines I teach with those of your own Scriptures, *judge what is right*, discern its conformity with all the principles of former revelations, and mark the extent and depth into which they are carried by my teaching, and acknowledge that it is from God? In our translation the paragraph mark connects this verse with what follows,

nale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last * mite.

* See Mark, chap. xii, 42.

instead of the preceding verses, to which it undoubtedly belongs.

Verse 58. *When thou goest with thine adversary, &c.*—See the notes on Matt. v, 25, 26, where the explanation of the terms and allusions of the parable will be found; but it was here spoken on a different occasion. It was, in fact, an exhortation to the Jews to be reconciled to their offended and rejected Saviour while the season of grace and salvation continued, drawn from the prudence of a debtor compromising matters with his creditor on the way to the magistrate, as the only means of escaping the harsh punishments inflicted in those days upon debtors, such as perpetual imprisonment till the debt was paid, with various torments. This is another instance of the same parable being spoken at different times, and to illustrate different morals.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galileans, and others. 6 The fruitless fig tree may not stand. 11 He healeth the crooked woman: 18 showeth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of his chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of leaven: 24 exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate, 31 and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.

1 THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were * sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

* Or, *debtors.*

CHAPTER XIII. Verse 1. *The Galileans whose blood, &c.*—As this incident is not mentioned by Josephus, it is impossible to ascertain the occasion of this slaughter. Pilate was a severe and cruel governor, *αμειλικτος*, as Philo describes him, and ready to take severe and indiscriminate revenge when there was any approach to tumult. Such turbulent commotions did in fact frequently take place at the great feasts at Jerusalem, and especially the passovers; and it is not unlikely that in one of these Pilate fell upon a body of Galileans. The place of the slaughter must have been Jerusalem, and in the precincts of the temple; because their blood is said to have been *mingled with their sacrifices*, that is, with *the blood* of their sacrifices. The conclusion to which the Jews probably had come was, that on account of this calamity being permitted to overtake them, they were in a peculiar sense *sinners*, sinners above others. They did not infer this from their tumultuous disposition; for to oppose the Roman authority was, in the estimation of the Jews, a virtue rather than a crime: but, as we may collect from the other example of the falling of the tower of Siloam, adduced by our Lord, it was the received notion that great calamities marked out the sufferers as special objects of the Divine displeasure, and therefore as eminently *sinners*. Our Lord corrects this uncharitable and pernicious error. He does not deny that the suffering parties were sinners, or that all calamity is generally to be considered the punishment of sin; but he discountenances the notion that they were sinners more than other inhabitants of Jerusalem, and that external sufferings are to be taken as the comparative measure of moral guilt; and farther, on these circumstances he grounds the solemn warning, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* This threat has in it the nature of a prediction; for great numbers of impenitent Jews, at the siege of Jerusalem, perished in a *similar* manner. The temple was often the seat of conflict, and the sacred places were drenched with the blood of the priests, and those who had come to offer sacrifices; while the fall of the tower of Siloam, one of the towers of the city walls, near the fountain of Siloam, upon the eigh-

6 ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it:*

9 And if it bear fruit *well:* and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

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teen victims, might be considered as emblematical of the fall of those towers and walls of their city, amid the ruins of which the Jews perished. The parable which follows urges still farther the necessity of immediate repentance.

Verses 6, 7. *A fig tree planted in his vineyard.*—The union of vines and fig trees in the same garden or plot of ground appears to have been quite customary; and one of the most beautiful images of rural tranquillity and prosperity is that of men "sitting under their vines and fig trees," none making them afraid. Many of their orchards were planted with vines and fig trees in alternate rows.

Came and sought fruit thereon.—The proprietor did this for *three years*, reckoning, no doubt, from the time when it had become mature or capable of bearing fruit. The fig tree is said not to bring forth edible fruit until it has been planted three years; but if so, there can be no allusion to this, since the planter well enough knew that it would be useless to seek fruit upon it the first or second year, and yet he is represented as having gone *three years seeking fruit.*—The three years, therefore, mark his care not to condemn a tree to the axe which might become fruitful; for the easterns are peculiarly careful of their fruit trees, on which they depend for food more than we: and also his patience in waiting until the case became hopeless.

Why cumbereth it the ground?—More literally, Why does it make the ground *idle?* that is, to cease from bearing fruit; which it would do, if the same space were occupied by a good tree. Why does it uselessly take up room? *Cut it down*, and plant another tree. The word is rare in heathen authors, and is used but four times in the LXX.—St. Paul, however, employs it six times; but chiefly in figurative applications. It is from κατα and αργος, that is, αεργος, *ceasing from labour.*

Verse 8. *Till I shall dig about it, and dung it.*—That these means were not necessary to produce fertility in fig trees, is evident from their growing and bearing fruit often by the waysides; and therefore these words of the *vine-dresser* denote the application of extraordinary means of conquering the barrenness. If, however, they were used in the cultivation of fig trees in enclosures, as appears from the classical quotations adduced by Wetstein, then the meaning of our Lord is, that it should be dug about and manured for another season; but still the words imply something extraordinary in the care and attention which were to be bestowed upon it.

Verse 9. *If it bear fruit, well.*—The *well* is supplied by the translators, but it properly and emphatically fills up the sense. Similar ellipses occur in the best Greek writers, as Kypke and Wetstein have shown. Euthymius supplies the ellipse by εν εχει. As to the meaning of the parable, nothing can be more obvious, or more instructive. The fig tree certainly represents the Jewish nation, planted by the hand of God himself, and favoured with special culture in his own vineyard, in order that it might yield the fruits of religion and piety. Nor does there seem any good reason why the *three years*, in which he is coming to seek fruit, should not have respect to the three years of our Lord's public ministry, although some would take them for an indefinite time. Certainly, as "where much is given much is required," the privilege of our Lord's great and attested ministry laid the nation under additional obligation to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and these were actually in a proportionate measure required from them.—The three years' delay before the sentence was pronounced, shows the calm and patient manner in which God governs the world; for he is "slow to anger, though great in power." The vine-dresser represents our great Mediator. By his intercessions a longer space was obtained for the Jewish nation, and multiplied means of salvation by the effusions of the Spirit and the preaching of the apostles; so the final execution of the sentence could no more be questioned on the ground either of justice or mercy, than the cutting down of a fig tree, after a delay of four years from the period of maturity, and the use of all means to render it fruitful. In this parable the Jews were solemnly warned of the necessity of instant repentance; and both the long suffering and righteousness of God in his dealings with them were illustrated. If this be the natural and obvious primary sense of the parable, the pious use which has often been made of it in sermons to rouse both nations and individuals to a sense of the necessity of IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE, may be fully justified against the cavils of some commentators. The PRINCIPLES involved in the parable are doubtless those on

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

11 ¶ And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

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which almighty God acts in the case of all, who, like the Jews, are favoured with peculiar religious advantages. Toward them he will exercise "long suffering;" all will find a pleading, pitying Intercessor; but mercy has its limit, mediation its boundary; and persevering unfruitfulness will bring "the axe to the root of the tree." These things were not spoken to the Jews only, but to us.

Verse 11. *A spirit of infirmity.*—That is, an evil spirit producing infirmity, for this follows from what is stated verse 16, "This woman whom Satan hath bound;" so that the *πνευμα ασθενειας* is not, as some pretend, a Hebrew idiom for the disease. She had been contracted or bent double by Satan; and, at the healing touch of our Lord, *she was made straight*, stood upright, and *glorified God*. This is a fine emblem of his raising the souls of men bent to earth, and fixed only on worldly pursuits, inspiring them with heavenly affections, teaching them to look upward, and thus to *glorify God*. On our Lord's healing on the Sabbath day, see the notes on Matt. xii, 1–12.

Verse 15. *Thou hypocrite.*—This affectation of regard to the Sabbath, to the neglect of the exercise of mercy when they had no interest at stake, and yet practising it when their property was concerned, as in the case of the care they took of their beasts on the Sabbath, was manifest hypocrisy, as being done under the influence of mercenary motives.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.

1 Paul commendeth his calling to the Romans, 9 and his desire to come to them. 16 What his Gospel is, and the righteousness which it showeth. 18 God is angry with all manner of sins. 21 What were the sins of the Gentiles.

1 PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, [a] separated unto the Gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ

[a] Acts, chap. xiii, 2.

CHAPTER I. Verse 1. *Paul.*—The Jews did not scruple to take Greek or Roman names, or to alter their own so as to be like them. Some hold that he took the name of Paul upon the conversion of Sergius Paulus the Roman governor, Acts xiii, 12.

A servant.—Δουλος does not always mean a slave; but sometimes, as with us, a servant. So the master in the parable is represented as ordering the servant, δουλος, indebted to him to be sold to pay the debt; which would have been of no advantage had he been already the absolute property of his lord. It is not therefore, as some suppose, in the oriental sense that St. Paul calls himself the δουλος of Jesus Christ, and that Christians are called δουλοι; and it is not without reason that the translation, "Paul, a SLAVE of Jesus Christ," would sound offensively. Not that all Christians are not the absolute property of Christ as purchased by him; but they are his also by rational and affectionate choice; and there is a manliness and a freeness in the spirit in which they serve him, which is inconsistent with the idea of slavery. Indeed St. Paul, being a Jew, was not likely to use the term *slave* in the oriental sense; for no Hebrew was allowed to be held in perpetual bondage, which was a state regarded with the utmost abhorrence as a condition of degradation. He would not, therefore, as Macknight assumes, use it as "a name of honour."

Called to be an apostle.—St. Paul in his epistle not only asserts his apostleship, as do other apostles in their epistles, but usually with some emphatic addition. His general formula is, "by the will of God:" here it is, *called to be an apostle*, that is, called specially, not when the twelve were called, nor in the same manner: but in a manner so remarkable, so miraculous indeed, called by our Lord himself in his glory, as to stamp his mission with the strongest authority. It was the more necessary for St. Paul to keep his apostolic character and authority prominently before the Churches, because the corrupting teachers of the perpetual obligation of Judaism, and those who wished to bring the Gentile believers under the yoke of the law, endeavoured to lower the authority of this great champion of Gentile liberty, and probably because he was not of the original number of the apostles chosen during the life of our Lord. That his apostleship was sometimes questioned by these perverse men, is certain; and on what other ground, it is difficult to conceive.

Separated unto the Gospel of God.—Here too he has respect to his vocation to the apostleship. He was then *set apart* by Christ himself for the special service of his truth; and from that time considered himself as wholly dedicated to that one work. And it is in this that the true ordination and separation of ministers consists. They are henceforward to be men of one business; *separated* from worldly pursuits and the worldly spirit, that they may give themselves up wholly to the ministry of the word. No other distinction by which they are *separated* from the rest of mankind is of any value without this. It is true that St. Paul sometimes made tents after he was an apostle; but not for his own benefit, but that he might not be burdensome to the Churches; and only from necessity, subordinating that, as well as every thing else, to his great work. As a Pharisee, he had been professedly *a separated* man, (ברש *separavit*,) but he was so truly, and in a higher sense. The Gospel is here called *the Gospel of God*, not because God and his gracious purposes to men are the *subjects* which it reveals, but because of its DIVINE AUTHORITY. The subject is declared in verse 3. It is *the Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ.*

Verse 2. *Which was promised afore, &c.*—To the Jew this point, being established was a conclusive argument. If the Christian system were the subject of the ancient prophetic promises of God made to all their fathers, and expatiated upon and repeated by

our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh;

4 And * declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

* Greek, *determined.*

all their prophets in succession, then the objection drawn from the supposed contrariety of the new doctrine to the old, was at once removed. Nothing was lost to the believing Jew but types and shadows, for which he obtained the great substance and end of the law for righteousness; and the exact accomplishment of the ancient revelations in the Gospel established and harmonized the divine authority of both. To the Gentile this was a cogent argument. To him it could be shown that the principles of Christ's religion had existed, and had been gradually developed through successive revelations, all recorded in a series of sacred books of undoubted antiquity, all preserved with the utmost care; and in the hands of the Jewish people,—men who generally were agreed to reject, and in the most malignant spirit to persecute Christianity,—so that their treatment of Christ and his religion was a sufficient guarantee that they had not interpolated these sacred books in their favour. The attention of reflecting Gentiles would, no doubt, in the first place, be attracted by the miracles wrought by the first preachers; but the evidence from ancient promises and prophecies would come in mightily to confirm their faith. The *prophets* here mentioned are the inspired writers of the Old Testament, including also the fathers, as the patriarchs, the revelations, and *promises* to whom those writers record.

Verse 4. *Declared to be the Son of God with power.*—Οριζω signifies to fix limits, and mark boundaries; and hence it is used for showing things to be what they really are. Our Lord is here said to have been *declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection.* That is, this was a declaration of this fact by evidence of the most powerful kind; and by that was confirmed and established. That our Lord was not constituted the Son of God by the resurrection, is clear from the fact that he had previously assumed that character, and was believed in as such by his disciples: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Whatever therefore was the import of that high title,—and in previous notes it has been proved to refer immediately to his Deity,—it was confirmed to our Lord by the irresistible proof of his resurrection from the dead; which, by establishing this, rendered all his other claims for ever indisputable, and exhibited him before the world as an infallible TEACHER, a Divine SACRIFICE, the all-meritorious INTERCESSOR, and the almighty REDEEMER of men. The clause, *according to the Spirit of holiness*, has been taken in two views; either "according to his holy, spiritual nature," in which sense it declares that Christ is the Son of God as to his divinity; or "according to the Holy Spirit" in his miraculous operations, in raising him from the dead, and in the Church as the consequence of his resurrection and ascension. These are the only two interpretations which are worthy consideration, several others which have been advanced being evidently forced and erroneous. The question between the two leading interpretations seems to be determined by the apparent antithesis which the apostle adopts, and that manifestly for the purpose of making the strongest distinction between the two clauses, κατα σαρκα, according to the flesh, and κατα πνευμα αγιωσυνης, *according to the Spirit of holiness.* Our Lord was *the Son of David according to the flesh*, or human nature; but he was *the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness*, which stands in direct opposition and contrast to *the flesh*, or human nature of Christ. Now the operations of the Holy Ghost, however they might demonstrate the truth of Christ's claims, and among the rest that of being the Son of God, in a sense which implied the Divinity of that relation, cannot be placed in contrast with his flesh or human nature. As *in respect of*, or *according to* the flesh, he was the Son of David, so *in respect of*, or *according to* something else, which was essential to himself, he was the Son of God; of which Sonship the resurrection from the dead was the proof. The operation of the Holy Ghost was indeed connected with the resurrection, and his pentecostal effusion was its consequence; and by all these he was declared to be the Son of God: but that which declared, defined, and marked him out with its powerful evidence as having the peculiar relation of a Son of God, in that higher nature which thus stands distinguished from the human, is manifestly distinct from that on which that relation itself rested. It is objected that *the Spirit of holiness* is an unusual phrase by which to designate the divine nature of the Son; to which it may be replied, that it is equally singular if considered as used of the third person of the trinity, who is constantly called the Holy Spirit, but not the Spirit of holiness. "Holiness" is used in several passages of the Old Testament for the divine Majesty; and we shall see reason to conclude, when we come to the passage, that in the Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul designates the higher and superior nature of Christ, "the eternal Spirit." That is certainly the only true interpretation

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, * for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

* Or, *to the obedience of faith.*

which preserves the antithesis between the Divine and human nature of Christ in the two clauses, *according to the flesh* and *according to the Spirit of holiness*, which would otherwise be lost; but the doctrine of the Divine Sonship of Christ is plainly enough asserted in this passage, independent of the clause in question. For let it be remarked that the apostle is speaking of what Christ is personally and essentially; for the authority of his official claims depends upon the truth of his personal ones, and if he be a Divine person he is every thing beside which he claimed to be. He is therefore considered by the apostle, distinctly in his two natures, as the Son of David, and as the Son of God, which, with the Jews everywhere, at Rome or Jerusalem, implied Divinity. To prove that he was the Son of David, no evidence was necessary but the Jewish genealogies; to prove him Divine, or, what was the same thing, the Son of God, as he himself professed before the Jewish council,—which condemned him on that very account as a blasphemer,—evidence of the strongest kind was necessary, and it was given in his resurrection from the dead.

Verse 5. *Grace and apostleship.*—Grace includes the personal salvation of St. Paul and his spiritual endowments. The GRACE comes first, then the OFFICE; for no man was ever by Christ sent forth as his minister, without previous experience of that *grace* which bringeth salvation. Nor is the case of Judas an exception, since there is just the same reason to conclude that, in the first stage of his apostleship, he was as sincere and enlightened as the rest. Those who would restrict *grace* here to miraculous gifts, do not appear to consider the superior importance of that effectual religious influence by which the heart of man is renewed "in knowledge and true holiness," to the office of the ministry in all its stages, not excluding, however all necessary qualifications. The word may indeed be taken in its primary sense of *favour;* as when St. Paul says, "Unto me who am the least of all saints is this GRACE given, that I should preach," &c. But this *favour* necessarily implies personal reconciliation with God, and the communication of Divine hallowing influence, without which man can neither fully know nor effectually teach the truths of Christianity.

The apostleship was one of those offices which did not descend to a future age. Its nature indicated its temporary character.—The apostles were to lay the FOUNDATION of the Christian Church, and appoint those who were to build upon it. They had, as eye witnesses, to testify the resurrection of Christ, which was the great demonstrative fact of the truth of Christianity; and to qualify him for this, St. Paul had a vision of Christ in his glory. They were also to work miracles in the name of Christ, and thus to establish the truth of the facts and doctrines of which they were made the teachers. They too had an *authority* which no other ministers possessed. Under special inspiration they explained the doctrines of Christ, laid down the terms of man's salvation, promulged the Christian law, and whatever things they thus "bound" or "loosed" on earth, that is, declared obligatory or otherwise upon men, were "bound" and "loosed" in heaven; so that God, in his moral government, deals with men according to the principles and rules they laid down in their preaching, and embodied in their writings, for the guidance of all future ages. This authority was peculiar to the apostles only, and given to them by an express act of Christ.

For obedience to the faith.—The end of the Christian ministry is to produce a true, firm faith in Christ; which is called the obedience to the faith, or rather the obedience of faith, because to believe is enforced by God's command. Christianity does not therefore stand on the same ground as systems of human opinion and man's wisdom, which no one is bound to believe, and from the rejection of which no evil, in the way of penalty, would result. Faith in Christ is the grand law of the new dispensation, and it is enforced under the highest sanctions. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." No respect is here paid to the principle of the mental innocence of infidelity. That may apply to *unauthorized* systems; but he that made man, and knows man's heart, has arranged the evidence of Christianity. To those who regard it seriously and honestly, it is sufficiently powerful to command entire faith; and when that does not follow, the fault is not in the weakness of the evidence, but in the state of the hearts of those who remain either in entire unbelief, or with whom faith is nominal and inoperative. They are therefore justly charged with criminality. They not only put away from them that salvation which God has connected with faith, but manifest a slight and contempt of the most stupendous displays of the Divine mercy, which places them under direct and eternal malediction.

For his name.—The preposition *υπερ* is best taken here in the sense of *on account of;* and *the name* of Christ, for the honour of Christ. The Gospel was preached to bring

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: grace to you

all nations to the obedience of faith, on account of the name or glorious honour of Christ, who is appointed the universal Saviour and King, to whose NAME "every knee" is ultimately to "bow."

Verse 6. *The called of Jesus Christ.*—"Calling" has reference to those parables of our Lord in which the Gospel is represented under the figure of a royal feast to which numerous guests are *invited*. Those who accept the invitation, and are received by the Master of the feast, are denominated THE CALLED, or invited, by way of eminence; and thus, rather than from military levies, or any other custom, was the term brought into the common theological language of the early Church. The great invitation to the free participation of evangelical blessings, was, under the authority and in the name of Christ, made by the apostles and first preachers to *all nations*, without distinction; and those who embraced it were *eminently the called of Christ Jesus*.

Verse 7. *To all that be in Rome, &c.*—To all the Christians in Rome. These were probably, for the most part, converted Jews, whose piety, zeal, and influence had, however, brought over many Gentiles. We have no account of the planting of this celebrated Church. From St. Paul expressing his desire to visit them for many years, it is plain that it existed at a very early period; and from its faith being so generally spoken of among Christians everywhere with admiration, that it had long acquired a noticeable maturity and stability. "The faith" might be taken back to Rome by some Jew or proselyte present at the day of pentecost, and there "pricked to the heart" under Peter's sermon, and then, by baptism, added to the Church. Or, the dispersion of Christians and their preachers, which took place on the death of Stephen, might lead some to settle in Rome. The intercourse between Judea and the capital of the world was so constant, that Christian Jews, at the earliest period, must have visited it.

Beloved of God, &c.—These expressions show the interesting relations in which every true Church stands to God; relations which no other association of men, however composed, or however dignified, can claim; and it affords a most powerful motive to a renunciation of the spirit, example, and sinful society of the world, and to confess Christ by visible fellowship with his true disciples. They are *beloved of God*, being his adopted children; *the called*, invited and received at the board of their Sovereign; *saints*, persons washed and sanctified from common and unholy uses to the peculiar service of God, and to offer to him as his priests the spiritual gifts and sacrifices of prayer, praise, and the obedient subordination of all their active powers to his sole will. This is the character of a true Church, and of the true members of which it is composed. And though indeed similar terms are applied collectively to the Jewish nation, who were, in a peculiar sense, his people and Church, it does not clearly appear that St. Paul applied these terms to a Christian Church, because they were originally applied to the Jewish. They so naturally arose out of the state into which Christianity had brought the members individually, and were so descriptive of it, that none so fit could have been adopted. But if they were indeed transferred from the Jewish to the Christian Church, they must from necessity have been used in a far stricter and special sense. The reason of this is, that the Jewish Church was founded upon natural descent from Abraham; the Christian Church is composed only of believers, who have undergone a moral change of nature, and who continue its members only so long as they remain vitally united to Christ, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. There is indeed a visible Church connected with this, into which all children are introduced by baptism, and out of which those do not ordinarily pass who, by sins against the laws of Christ, cut themselves off from that true, invisible Church, the names of whose members are written in heaven; but to be in this Church is a state of PRIVILEGE, not necessarily a state of SALVATION. The apostles evidently contemplated the Churches to which they wrote, as for the most part at least composed of persons who "knew the grace of God in truth," and had been reconciled to God, and regenerated by his Spirit.—Hence the description of a Church collectively was no more than a description of what was taken to be the state of its individual members, at least so many of them as gave a character to the whole society. For as unquestionably the apostles had views so just of Christianity, the grand remedy of the moral evils of human nature, that they thought they laboured wholly in vain unless "they turned men from darkness to light, and the power of Satan unto God," and unless through the Gospel published by them, they "obtained forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified" or hallowed ones; so they never could call those *beloved of God*, who had never been reconciled to God, nor those *saints* who had not been actually washed from their sins. Nor can there be any perversion of the New Testament more guilty and fatal than that which

and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve

would teach us to estimate the effect intended to be produced by Christianity upon the hearts of men, by the force which such terms as beloved of God, or chosen people, or God's sanctified, or the redeemed of the Lord, possess when applied collectively and nationally to the Jews. Such terms in the New Testament must have the force not of the old, but of the new dispensation: the shadow was in the former, the substance in the latter; and let no one deceive himself, for he that is in Christ IS A NEW CREATURE; as this epistle will fully unfold in its subsequent parts.

Grace to you and peace.—All spiritual blessings are summed up in these terms; in this, St. Paul's favourite form of benediction. *Grace* is that special favour of God which he bears to those who are reconciled to him through the death of his Son, and adopted into his family, with all the benefits consequent upon it,—the gift of the Holy Spirit, the special care and protection of God, and the joyful hope of eternal life. *Peace* was the usual form of eastern salutation; but it is here raised in its import. It is not a wish or prayer for temporal blessings; but that rich satisfaction and sweet tranquillity of mind which arises from inward intercourse and communion with God as our Father and Friend, and from those abiding manifestations of his gracious presence, with which the true disciple is favoured.

Verse 8. *Through Jesus Christ.*—This is to be specially noted as an example of the presentation of an act of thanksgiving to God, THROUGH Jesus Christ. It shows the light in which the apostle regarded the mediation of Jesus Christ; and all acts of prayer and praise are to have respect to him as the MERITORIOUS CAUSE of their acceptance on the part of God.

Your faith is spoken of, &c.—Not merely their belief in Christ's mission, and in Christianity, as of Divine authority; for without such belief they could not have been even nominally Christians; but their faith as a vital, actuating principle, producing love, zeal, and obedience to the whole will of Christ. As Christians from every part were in the habit of going to Rome, so on their return they *published*, with joyful admiration, the excellent spirit and example of the Church in that city, in which they would naturally feel the deepest interest, as being planted in the very seat of idolatry, and under the immediate cognizance of the imperial government. Thus its faith was *spoken of*, or honourably declared through the *world*, or Roman empire, *in toto orbe Romano.*

Verse 9. *For God is my witness, &c.*—In calling God to witness to that great affection he had for the Church at Rome, whom he had never seen in the flesh, and his strong desire to have visited them, he conciliated them to receive that more perfect instruction in certain doctrines, somewhat offensive to the Jewish part of the members, which the epistle contains; and he probably meets a tacit objection, as to his apparent neglect of the Gentiles of the metropolis of the world, when he professed himself, in a peculiar sense, called to be the apostle of the Gentiles. He insists so strongly upon his frequent purposes and ardent desire to exercise his ministry in Rome, that we must suppose that he had been exposed to some imputation for not having already made that great city the scene of his labours. That he *made mention of them in his prayers without ceasing* proved how great an interest he felt in their welfare, though they had not been the fruits of his own ministry; and that he had been *let* or hindered in fulfilling the purpose of visiting them, and that, by indispensable engagements in his great work, and the appointments of the Holy Spirit, under which he acted, was a reason for his absence which admitted of no objection. Some interpreters have considered this as an instance of that dexterous courtesy by which St. Paul often succeeded in setting himself in a favourable position before his auditors or readers. Much of this contemptible criticism has been applied to his epistles; but art is subsequent to nature, and, at best, ill imitates it. Here all is truth and feeling, and not artifice; and the simple declaration of two truths,—his constant prayers for them, and his constant desires to visit them,—effected infinitely more than a laboured apology, into which he would no doubt have run had he been practising the art of the rhetorician.

Whom I serve with my spirit.—To serve with the spirit, is usually taken to signify, to serve with zeal and earnestness, *ex toto animo*; but it rather expresses the spiritual service in which St. Paul was engaged, and to which he had consecrated all his faculties.

Verse 10. *By the will of God.*—The prayer that he might have a *prosperous journey* to them, that the opportunity might favourably open, and the journey itself be safe and crowned with good success, was made in submission to *the will of God*, to which we are thus taught to subordinate all our purposes and plans, even when they excite in us the strongest desires. St. Paul was *let* or hindered, verse 13, by that very will of God, in dutiful subjection to which he had

with *my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I may be comforted together † with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I would not have you igno-

* Or, *in my spirit.*

† Or, *in you.*

made the request. The apostles were not in their own hands; and that peculiar guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to their labours, under which they were placed, appears to have been often vouchsafed by sudden and unlooked-for impulses, changing their places and counterventing their most deliberate purposes. This is one of the proofs that they were under that inspiration which they professed. A fanatic turns those impressions which he fancies to be from God, into the channel of his own will and inclination. The apostles had learned not "to live to themselves, but to Christ," and to acknowledge, that in a work which respected the deep and comprehensive designs of God's mercy to the world, not even spiritual and experienced men were, of themselves, competent judges either of TIME or PLACE. St. Paul was indeed permitted to visit Rome, but at a future time; and his journey was not to be that *prosperous journey* which he requested, but a journey of perils and suffering; he was indeed to enter Rome as an "ambassador," but an "ambassador in bonds." So differently, *in the mode*, does God bring about those purposes and plans of ours which he is pleased to accomplish.

Verse 11. *Some spiritual gift.*—The commentators who would interpret this of miraculous gifts, do not consider, 1. That the impartation of miraculous gifts does not appear to have so distinguished St. Paul's ministry, at any time, that he should be anxious to take a journey to Rome for this purpose. 2. That St. Paul, in no place of his epistles, attaches so much importance to these gifts, as to make it reasonable to suppose that the great object of his desire to visit Rome, was to communicate them to the Church there. Generally he rather labours to repress that excessive admiration of them, into which the first Christians too frequently fell. 3. That for any thing that appears to the contrary, other apostles and evangelists could have communicated extraordinary gifts; or indeed they might "fall," as we know they did, upon believers, without any human medium; but to St. Paul alone of all the apostles, the great office was assigned of explaining the precise constitution of the Christian Church, as it respects the liberty of the Gentiles from the law of Moses, and the cessation of the obligation of certain parts of that institution. His ministry was essential to a right understanding of some of these difficult and controverted points; but not at all to the impartation of the full measure of miraculous endowments. 4. The phrase *some spiritual gift*, if so interpreted, would intimate that some one gift in particular was necessary to the perfection of a primitive Church. Of this we have no intimation; nor can it be proved but that Churches might exist in those early times in a state of completeness and efficiency without having had imparted to any of their members any such gift at all; miraculous powers being confined, as to them, to the apostles or evangelists who first raised them up. We may therefore conclude more reasonably, that the spiritual gift, *χαρισμα πνευματικον*, was not, in the proper sense, miraculous, but truly spiritual, as relating to the soul; and that it was to be imparted through his teaching them, according to that superior "knowledge which he had in the mystery of Christ;" and this view is supported by the intention he proposed, *to the end that ye may be established*, which is opposed to that wavering of mind which is produced, not by any doubt as to the Divine authority of Christianity, which miracles might remove, but by erroneous or defective views of its doctrines, the remedy of which was more perfect instruction. This is farther confirmed by verse 12, *That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*—The full knowledge of the important truths he wished them to understand, would produce an equal *faith* in them and in him. The knowledge being *mutual*, the faith would be *mutual* also, which would issue in their being comforted together. The reason, then, why St. Paul so earnestly wished to visit the Roman Christians was, that he might make them sharers of that more perfect knowledge of various branches of evangelical truth with which he had been endued; impress upon them all those motives to constancy and perseverance which such truths contained; and also that by his public ministry he might have FRUIT in Rome as among other Gentiles.—That *spiritual gift* which he was desirous of imparting to them by personal teaching, seems, in consequence of the Divine appointment *hindering* his purpose, to have been communicated through this important epis-

rant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit * among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

* Or, *in you.*

tle; a writing equally adapted to the instruction of both the Jews and Gentiles, of which the Roman Church was composed, and of standing, unaltered value and efficiency to all classes of men to this day.

Verses 14, 15. *I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians.*—The Greeks usually called all other people barbarians; a word indeed not so harsh in its meaning with them as with us, yet nevertheless implying political and intellectual culture in a lower degree than they assumed to themselves.—It is probable, however, that the Romans were, in St. Paul's age, included in the term Greeks, as having long become a refined and cultivated people; and a term implying the reproach of inferiority not being likely to be used in current language, such as St. Paul here employs, with reference to the lords of the Greeks themselves. The context, indeed, proves that St. Paul includes the Romans in it, as well as in the term *wise* that follows; for his argument is, that being a *debtor* to all men, he was ready to preach, not only in places distant from the seat of empire, and less cultivated and discerning, but at Rome also; *to the Greeks*, to those instructed in the Greek philosophy and arts, as were the Romans; and *to the wise*, for Rome was crowded with sophists and professors of philosophy, both Greeks and Romans; as well as to the *unwise*.

St. Paul calls himself a *debtor* with reference to his office. He, like all other ministers, acted under a commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" and being especially raised up for the service of the Gentiles, he was under special obligation to fulfil his ministry among them universally, whatever might be their rank and nation. His charity to the souls included in so vast a city as that of Rome, and his sense of duty, made him *ready*, προθυμος, *anxiously desirous, to preach* the Gospel to the Romans also.

Verse 16. *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*—At Rome, of course, the Gospel, like every new system of philosophy, would come under the notice both of the intelligent and inquiring who abounded in that city, and the scrutiny of a jealous government itself. The sophists were skeptics or infidels; they therefore would subject all the supernatural pretensions of the preachers of this new religion to a severe test. But even the skeptical and the infidels were most strenuous advocates for upholding the popular superstition, as an instrument for managing the minds of the lower classes and maintaining the peace of society; and were equally jealous with the most superstitious of any thing which could tend to alienate the minds of any considerable portion of men from the religion of their ancestors. Neither, therefore, from the skeptical nor the superstitious could Christianity expect any favour. Nevertheless, says St. Paul, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;* he hesitated not to put it to the severest tests, and to expose it to the most piercing scrutiny, with entire confidence that he should not be confounded or made ashamed by the result. Persecuted it might be, but not disproved; and contemptuously slighted by some, but by others it would be received through the force of its evidence; and he knew that it would erect monuments of its own Divinity in the moral changes produced in individuals, and ultimately in society. The ground of this confidence in the Gospel, no doubt, embraced more particulars than are stated. St. Paul would naturally advert to the character of Christ, that summary of all high and commanding proofs in itself; to the evidence of miracles and prophecy; to its internal excellence; to the vast and varied range of its revealed truth; but he fixes upon ONE only,—its moral efficacy,—and with that he confronts every system of human invention. Its character is *power*, a power producing effects mercifully superhuman, and therefore the *power of God*, and this power of God directed to one grand end affectingly illustrative of the Divine benevolence, the *salvation* of men; a term in which St. Paul always includes their deliverance from sin, in its POWER and its CONSEQUENCE; of course the remission of sins by pardon, and the deliverance of the heart and affections, the springs of action in man, from its influence and pollution; the consequent restoration of man to the Divine favour and image, and to immortality and changeless blessedness. The Gospel had power to effect this,—that was the ground of the apostle's confidence; and not only as to a few persons more favourably circumstanced than others to receive, to retain, and to improve moral impressions, but

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, [b] The just shall live by faith.

[b] Habakkuk, chap. ii, 4.

to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; in which words he refers to the actual proof of the fact from experience. These mighty moral changes had taken place in the Jew first, because the Gospel had been first proposed to Jews and received by them; but not less was its efficacy marked among the Greeks who had been made "fellow heirs" with them, and partakers of the same benefit, without distinction or limitation. Wherever the medicine had been received, there the cure had infallibly followed.

Verse 17. *For therein the righteousness of God, &c.*—This may be considered as the commencement of the leading subject of this epistle, the justification of guilty men before God. For the mention of this subject leads him to prove the necessity of such an interposition of the Divine mercy from the corrupt and condemned condition of all men, both Gentiles and Jews, on which he dwells in the concluding part of this and in the next chapter, with such force of argument, and such strength of language, unveiling both the crimes of mankind, and the depraved principles from which they flow, and bringing in as by a verdict "the whole world guilty before God."

The phrase, *the righteousness of God*, has had as many senses attached to it as men have differed in their views of justification. Hence it is taken for freedom from the punishment of sin; for probity, for benignity, for righteousness by faith, and finally, as by Wahl and others, for the mode of obtaining righteousness or justification which God has exhibited in the Gospel, *ratio divini favoris consequendi.* The last is the true view of the apostle's meaning, as will appear from his general argument. Man is under a law which connects life with obedience, death with transgression. The innocent, when brought before the bar, claim justification in their own right; they have never sinned, and are not therefore liable to punishment; but if the guilty are justified, that is, treated as righteous persons through an act of forgiveness,—which will appear to be the sense in which St. Paul uses the term justification when applied to the guilty,—they must be justified, or placed in this condition of righteous persons, through some special appointment of God. That appointment does not in the Gospel rest upon an act of God's prerogative; but upon his having devised and accepted a SATISFACTION for sin, so that under a condition the remission of sin and the happy consequences of that act of grace, are mercifully offered to the acceptance of men in the Gospel. For this reason, that authorized and attested method of justifying the ungodly, which is contained in this Divine religion, is called the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. It stands opposed to "our own righteousness," that which fallen men vainly fancy they can themselves attain to by efforts of their own: and it is that to which God hath set his seal as the only rule or method of reconciliation to himself, so that the guilty may escape the merited and actually denounced condemnation of his law. It is necessary to hold this simple and clear view of the subject steadily before us, in order to escape those darkening and perplexing comments by which unenlightened men on the one hand, and systematizing divines on the other, have often obscured so plain a subject.

Revealed from faith to faith.—That great subject, the method of man's justification, is said to be *revealed* in the Gospel, not that it was a new doctrine, for from the beginning, up to Abel, the truly penitent were justified by faith in the grand propitiation for sin appointed by God; but because it was *fully uncovered*, as the word signifies, brought from under the veil of the types of the law, and the religious superstitions and gross ignorance of heathenism, and placed in its full lustre and evidence before the whole world. From *faith to faith*, may be understood as an intensive expression, like *τη ανομια εις την ανομιαν*, Rom. vi, 19, "to iniquity unto iniquity," that is, entire and absolute iniquity; or as implying progression from one degree of iniquity to the greatest. The sense under this view will be, as Locke and Seiler have it, "wholly by faith," or from one degree or measure of faith to another; intimating that the doctrine has a progressive evidence, calling into exercise a higher and a still higher faith, and imparting the fulness of its benefits accordingly. This is an important truth; for Christianity has a germinant evidence in all its parts, and in none so much as in that most glorious portion of it which indeed constitutes its very essence, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" the mystery of which is continually opening to the faithful; but in the text *εκ πιστεως* may be connected with the righteousness of God, a similar order of words frequently occurring. The meaning then will be, that the *righteousness of God by, or through faith*, God's method of justifying men by the instrumentality of faith in Christ, is revealed *εις πιστιν, to faith*, or, *in order to faith*, so that, by this means, the grace designed for all upon their believing,

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

may be by all attained. This sense is clear and satisfactory. Rosenmuller and Schleusner interpret εις πιστιν, "to those who have faith," but erroneously; the end of the revelation being to *produce* faith in all to whom the publication of this good news of salvation might reach. The apostle does not here bring the quotation out of Habakkuk ii, 4, as a prophecy fulfilled in the Gospel; nor, on the other hand, is it a mere ornament, as we use classical quotations. It is manifestly employed to give strength to the argument, and must therefore have some connection with it. That connection lies in the conformity of the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith, with the principles admitted by the saints of the Old Testament, and acted upon in the moral government of God. Whoever turns to the Prophet Habakkuk will observe that the passage is not, as some commentators have represented it, a declaration that those who believed God's word as to the invasion of the Chaldeans, and submitted to them, should live. The words have no such meaning; but stand in a connection which obliges us to a very different interpretation. The prophet had had a vision of the destruction of the Babylonian power. This was accompanied with an intimation that the event would be delayed; yet "though the vision tarry, wait for it," wait for its accomplishment in steadfast faith; which leads to a general observation, applicable to all the revelations of God; that the souls of men, "not upright," lift themselves up against God, in proud rejection of his testimony; but that "the just shall live by his faith," that is, it shall be life and salvation. So the just have always lived by faith in the revelations of God; and so says the apostle, as this is a standing rule of God's moral government, those who believe the revelation of God's method of justifying men by faith shall live by it. Those who render the passage, *The just by faith, shall live*, forget that this is not Old Testament language; and nothing is gained by it.

Verse 18. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.*—Critics have differed as to the connection of these words with the preceding. Some regard γαρ as having an inchoative form, as marking the commencement of St. Paul's argument with the Gentiles, drawn from their sinful condition, and consequent need of pardon. Others think that there is an implied contrast between the Gospel and the law of nature, the former proclaiming salvation, the latter denouncing wrath against offenders. But the usual force of the particle is best retained, and it marks the connection to be, that the Gospel is the more worthy to be published and embraced as the power of God unto salvation, because of the actual and extreme danger of men as sinners. In the Gospel there is a revelation of a divinely appointed method of pardon; and the necessity and value of this is grounded upon another and previous *revelation of the wrath of God against all ungodliness, &c.* That revelation of the judicial vengeance of God against sin was contained in the traditional law of the Gentiles, sometimes called natural law, confirmed and illustrated by the course of God's moral government, and by the books of the Old Testament, so that both Gentiles and Jews had the means of knowing that the wages of sin is death, and indeed generally acknowledged it. This point the apostle does not therefore proceed to prove. The testimony of tradition, however perverted, the voice of conscience, the fact of man's subjection to suffering and death, and the obvious connection of every species of sin with misery, were all witnesses to the Gentiles of the penal danger to which sin exposed them; and as to the Jews, their own law fulminated its curse against every transgression. The apostle therefore assumes that it will be granted by both, that the supreme Lawgiver has connected misery and death with sin; and he therefore goes on to prove that both Gentiles and Jews were actually guilty and under condemnation, and on this ground builds the grand doctrinal position of the early part of this epistle, that we are "justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in, or by, Jesus Christ."

Ungodliness and unrighteousness.—These two terms express all possible human offences. *Ungodliness* comprehends all sins against God; *unrighteousness*, all offences against men. The one includes all forgetfulness of God, or contempt of him, or false worship, —all atheism, practical or speculative, all idolatry, superstition, and rebellion against his authority; the other, all injustice and uncharitableness. The words are not, however, used distinctively; and ασεβεια is sometimes used of sin in general.

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness.—This may be taken in the sense of *restraining* the *truth by unrighteousness*, without going along with those who think that those wicked magistrates and philosophers were intended who, though they knew better than the populace, in many respects, yet encouraged the popular superstition, from political motives. There is much truth in the fact; but the apostle is speaking too generally to allow us to think that he had any respect to this par-

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest *in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them.

* Or, *to them*

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are

ticular, and indeed very partial case. What he means to say evidently is, that the *wrath of God is revealed from heaven*, not against ungodly and unrighteous men who had no means of knowing the difference between right and wrong, but those who had *the truth*, but *restrained* or hindered it in its moral influence upon them by their wilful and resolute unrighteousness. This view is fully confirmed by the succeeding verse. Another objection to the former opinion is, that it confines what follows to the magistrates and philosophers of the Gentiles; whereas, it is obvious that the apostle speaks of the Gentiles in general, as indeed his argument required. For it would have answered no purpose to prove the guilt of politicians and sages only, when it was necessary to show that "the whole world was guilty before God."

Verse 19. *That which may be known of God.*—Not certainly all that is humanly knowable respecting God, *cognoscibile Dei;* for the Gospel is a far brighter manifestation of God than any which the most favoured times of paganism could boast. Το γνωστον is evidently used for η γνωσις, the knowledge of God; for St. Paul often uses neuter adjectives for substantives. *This was manifest among them; for God had showed it to them.* The original traditions from the patriarchs respecting God had been all along confirmed and attested by the visible works of God; so that the idea of God, his nature and government, being transmitted from age to age, serious and reflecting minds might have been established in these truths, and might have pursued them to profitable moral conclusions. Human reason was never left to acquire, for the first time, the knowledge of the existence of God from his works; but that doctrine being already in the world, the works of God made their constant appeal to the reason of man, presented to it an evidence of the most convincing kind, and opened courses of ennobling and sanctifying thought which, if they had taken the least delight in them, would have preserved men from all the degrading polytheism which followed.

Verse 20. *For the invisible things, &c.*—By this expression is meant the invisible attributes of God, and consequently his invisible self. The statues of the supposed heathen deities attempted to make visible their various attributes, by emblematical devices and symbolical sculptures. Here the apostle, by asserting the invisibility of God, declares, in fact, his ineffable and indescribable majesty, which is not to be represented by any human device, but to have its only proper manifestation in the glorious and magnificent works of his own hand. By these the invisible God, in his attributes, is seen by his attentive creatures. The apostle says, τα αορατα, the invisible things or properties of God, because his essence is undiscovered and undiscoverable. We know him only by the perfections which he is pleased to manifest. There may be perfections which he has never manifested to us, and which we are in no state of preparation mentally to apprehend, even in the feeblest manner. The essence of even created minds is hidden from us; much more the essence of God; that in which all these properties of glory and majesty unite.

From the creation of the world.—This is equivalent to the created world. Some choose to render it, SINCE *the creation*, that is, from the time of the creation; alleging that απο is the preposition used. But απο is used to express the cause or instrument, and is then properly rendered, *by means of;* and there seems no reason why St. Paul should put it into his argument that God had been manifest by his works ever since the creation, because it was sufficient for his purpose to show that they were clearly so at that moment, and, if then, of course in all preceding ages. The use too of the present tense, καθορατα, *are clearly seen*, shows that he was speaking of the time when he wrote.

Being understood by the things that are made.—The apostle shows how he uses the term *clearly* or *distinctly* SEEN, by means of the works of creation. Not that these works were parts of God, as many of the heathen thought, and as the pantheistic systems of the eastern world now teach, so that God might be seen IN them, but BY them as instruments and witnesses. These, he says, these invisible things are *understood*, νοουμενα, mentally seen or apprehended,—*mente animoque cernuntur*, as Rosenmuller renders it,—by *the things that are made*, and which are indubitable proofs of the wisdom and power of their Maker, though he is invisible. Some include in the τα ποιηματα all the operations of God in his moral government, and the previous dispensation of grace; and it is certain that the word used is wide enough in its meaning to comprehend them. The argument, however, rather binds us to take it in its stricter sense of the creation and preservation of those things which are visible in the frame and constitution of the

made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; * so that they are without excuse:

* Or, *that they may be.*

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in

world. But it by no means follows from this, that the apostle intended to teach that the principles of God's moral government, his will, and our duties and hopes, in a word, all that has been termed natural religion, is to be learned by the study of physics, and that the visible world is a sufficient book for man. The apostle knew well that both among Gentiles and Jews from the earliest ages, there had been communications of moral truth in direct revelations, and traditions of those revelations; that the world had never been without moral laws, or without promises of redemption: and what he knew to be fact, universally acknowledged by those to whom he writes, he assumes; and considers, therefore, that what proves the existence of that God, made known, as to his will and designs, in these early and widely diffused revelations, gave authority also to all the truth which had ever been connected with the doctrine. He assumes, in fact, what we see assumed throughout the Scriptures, that God communicated the knowledge of himself and his will originally to mankind; that this knowledge, though disregarded and darkened, was never wholly lost; that the visible creation was a standing *testimony* to it as existing, not the means of first revealing it, nor of recovering it through a process of reasoning, if, in any instance, entirely lost.

Eternal power and Godhead.—The first impression made upon the mind, by a general survey of creation, is *power;* power without limits, power which we know operates undeviatingly and unwearyedly from age to age, and stands therefore as a mighty confirmation of the original doctrine always connected with the idea of God—his eternity. *Power*, however, comprehends other attributes.—That power which we see in creation is not blind might, but the might of intelligence and of goodness, all which may be included in THE ENERGY of God: but as these are separate attributes, they naturally lead us up to the Being whose attributes they are; and to the distinctive general character of that Being; that which distinguishes him from all others; that which marks him as the supreme, the eternal ONE: which distinctive character is expressed by the apostle, by Θειοτης, *Godhead*, or Divinity, from Θειος, the same as Θεος, God. To Θειον is often used by Greek writers for the Divine Being, the Deity.

So that they are without excuse.—They were inexcusable for their ignorance, which was the result of criminal inattention to the testimonies of God, with which they were surrounded; and for their superstitions and idolatries, which were wilful perversions and wicked corruptions of the truths they knew, through the grossness of the imagination produced by immoral habits and vicious principles, fatal to spirituality of mind in religion, and therefore destructive of its true character. They were without excuse, because neither their ignorance of God, nor their errors or idolatries, resulted from any necessity, but were the objects of their free choice.

Verse 21. *Because that, when they knew God.*—That is, THOUGH *they knew God;* knew him indeed sufficiently to have preserved them from the baseness of idolatry, and have laid the foundation of trust in him, and the giving of honour and worship to him. Nor is this at all contrary to what the apostle says in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, that the world "by wisdom knew not God;" since it is certain that what they called *wisdom*, or philosophy, was one main cause of corrupting the original theology of the Gentile nations; and that its speculations only served to feed the grossest parts of idolatry. For instance, the early philosophic doctrine of pantheism, teaching that God is all things, and all things God, gave a sort of divinity to every part of nature, and rendered it more easy for men to bring themselves to deify its elements and all remarkable and powerful agents or principles. Yet although, as to all the civilized nations of antiquity, and many of the barbarous nations also, we have sufficient evidence that they knew and admitted the existence of one supreme and only true God, yet *they glorified him not as God*, neither were thankful, nor offered to him thanksgiving. To *glorify* God is to worship him because of his own perfections and majesty; to give *thanks* to him is an act of worship founded upon the benefits we receive from him. In the former we celebrate his glories; in the latter, proclaim his goodness: the former is founded upon admiration, love, and trust; the latter springs from gratitude, and is the source and root of universal and constant obedience. The expression, *did not glorify him* AS GOD, is emphatic. They were not ignorant of his existence; their poets and other writers sometimes said noble things respecting him; just as the idolaters of India speak in terms of highest honour of one supreme God at the present day, who, however, as they think, concerns not himself with them; and they, therefore, as to worship, wholly forget him. What we know of the idolatrous worship of civilized nations of the present day throws

their imaginations, and their foolish heart was [c] darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

[c] Ephesians, chap. iv, 18.

indeed, great light upon the idolatry of more ancient times. The interposition of intermediate ideal beings, and the deification of creatures, have not among the people in India obliterated all knowledge of God; and, in their older sacred books, as in the writings of the Greeks, there are occasionally just and sublime things said of God, the traditions of better ages still keeping their hold upon the convictions of the mind. But these imaginary deities have wholly displaced the supreme God in their thoughts, and he is neither trusted in nor worshipped; the immediate government of the world is supposed to be in other hands, and all religious honour and service has been transferred to them. Throughout India not a temple is built to this very supreme God, whom all but those of the Budhist faith, who are atheists, acknowledge; and not a prayer is offered.—This seems to have been pretty nearly the fact, in the more civilized nations of antiquity, when St. Paul wrote. That they had knowledge of the true God, we have St. Paul's testimony, as well as proofs in those extracts from numerous oriental, Greek, and Latin writers, which have been often brought to illustrate this subject; but that they erected a single temple to him, we have no satisfactory evidence. It is true that by the Ζευς or Jupiter of both Greeks and Romans was sometimes meant, though not usually nor popularly, the supreme God, the Jehovah of the Old Testament; but we have most satisfactory evidence, though of an incidental kind, even in inspired writ, that, by the Jupiter to whom temples were erected, and honours were regularly paid, this supreme Deity was not intended, but the Jupiter of the popular mythology. For if any one of the temples at Athens, though it were of Jupiter himself, had been erected to the true God, though under a foreign name and some misconceptions of his true attributes, the Apostle Paul, who had been about the city observing the "devotions" of the inhabitants, would scarcely have been driven to the necessity of fixing upon a solitary "altar," without a priesthood or regular service, an apparently neglected place of accidental offering, as the text of his sermon, because it contained an inscription "TO GOD UNKNOWN," and was probably a relic of the piety of past days, in some individual acknowledging that there was a God of perfections above the knowledge of creatures, a God incomprehensible, who ought to be worshipped. Surely, if there had been a single temple in the whole city, or state, or even Greece itself, which had been dedicated to the same being as this isolated and neglected altar, he would have found in this an admission in favour of his argument much more powerful and convincing, and one which it is evident, from his quoting one of their poets, he would have been glad to avail himself of. The very fact, therefore, that they had no temples erected to the true God, no public service offered to him, proves the apostle's words: they *glorified him not* AS GOD, as the immediate ruler of the world, as the giver of good, or the avenger of evil, or as possessing attributes to be acknowledged, adored, and imitated. To use the expressive language of the Old Testament, they wholly "forgat God," and gave his glory to them which are no gods.

But became vain in their imaginations.—Εν τοις διαλογισμοις, in their thoughts and opinions. The word may indeed be taken for the *reasonings* of the philosophers; but we are to guard against those commentators who interpret the apostle as speaking principally of the heathen sages. He includes them, it is true, but, as his argument requires, in the mass of Gentiles, princes, magistrates, philosophers, priests, and people. The gross tendency to superstition in the mass, and the various doubtful or most erroneous speculations concerning the Divine nature among the pretended wise, and the artifice of priests to increase ceremonies, and visible objects of superstitious regard, for the sake of the gifts brought to their rival shrines, all produced *opinions* among the Gentiles generally in favour of idolatry; for of this St. Paul especially speaks. *To become vain* is, in the language of a Jew, to run into idolatry; and hence τα ματαια, *vain, deceiving, disappointing*, and therefore *absurd* and *foolish* things as objects of religious trust, is the term for idols, answering to the Hebrew הבל. *And their foolish heart*, their UNDISCERNING, UNINTELLIGENT *heart was darkened.* Having courted error rather than held fast the truth which existed among them, led by the evil state of their *hearts*, (for it is the corrupt condition of the affections which perverts the judgment in matters of religion,) that *undiscerning* heart became farther *darkened*, so as to invent, defend, and practise the most senseless idolatries that ever debased the human intellect and corrupted human manners.

Verse 22. *Professing themselves wise.*—With respect to the Greeks and Romans, whom St. Paul had more immediately in his eye, the word φασκοντες implies a degree of boasting. Not only did these philosophers exult over the supposed ignorance

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible [d] God into an image made

[d] Psalm cvi, 20.

like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things

of other nations, not excepting the Jews; but the people, generally, accounted others as barbarians in comparison of themselves. But among the barbarous nations so called by them, that is, the civilized or semi-civilized orientals, whose territories comprised then as now the greater portion of the human race, precisely the same kind of philosophy which the Greeks called wisdom was known, and has been transmitted to the present day. All the various schools of Greece may be found in India; nor is this profession of wisdom confined to the more learned among the orientals; but various metaphysical systems which respect the Divine nature, the soul of man, the hopes of a future life, the principles of right or wrong, more or less subtle in logic or imaginative, are diffused through the mass of the population, who boast of them as wisdom, and employ them to resist the evidence of truth, and to support their gross and degrading idolatries. This profession of *wisdom* is not, therefore, by any means, as is done by some commentators, to be confined to the Greek and Roman philosophers; but has been diffused with paganism everywhere, except it may be with those who have at length gone down into the absolutely savage state: and even traces of metaphysical and misleading reasoning on a few points is sometimes found among them.

They became fools, &c.—This is a strong expression, but may be fully justified. For what folly could exceed the idolatries of the most celebrated, and, as to the knowledge of arts, the most cultivated of these nations, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, Rome, &c., which consisted in worshipping and trusting in imaginary beings, of whose very existence they had no evidence, to whose number they were constantly adding, and whose characters were confessedly gross, faithless, and licentious? What can so truly be called sottishness of mind, an infatuation which deprives men of right reason, as the worship of images of men, beasts, and reptiles, whether the things themselves were considered sacred as the representatives of invisible and powerful beings?—and the whole of what is called superstition as distinct from idol worship,—the attaching of virtue, for good or for evil, (and that operating necessarily, unless counteracted by some other power quite as blind,) to charms, particular actions, times, flights of birds, appearances of the entrails of sacrifices, extraordinary natural phenomena, and innumerable other things, to the entire exclusion of the wise and intelligent government of one true God, the sole Maker and Governor of the world? Nor was this confined to the vulgar only: the majority of the higher ranks were zealots in the respective religions of these countries, as appears from the stupendous temples erected everywhere for their celebration; while such as were generally skeptical often fell into atheistical or other errors, as far removed from reason as the folly which disgusted them; while the few who appear to have laid a faster hold of the floating traditions of truth, and spoke of one God as the Governor and Maker of all things, openly and constantly practised the established worship, as Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, and strenuously taught conformity to all the rites of this absurd and impure superstition. This brand of *folly* is thus fixed upon them all; nor is it at all relieved by alleging that many among them had a better secret doctrine, although they were to be blamed for not giving the public the benefit of it. For not to urge that if this were so, it did not effect the general state of society of which St. Paul speaks,—the number of those initiated into the mysteries in which only this secret and better doctrine is supposed to have been preserved, being both few, and they bound to secrecy; it may indeed be doubted, whether for many ages at least, the mysteries themselves revealed any such degree of truth as was of the least practical value. Whatever they might be in the commencement, they would partake of the common deterioration; and this is certain, that those initiated into their secrets did not stand forth as superior to others in any virtue. They are never alluded to in the New Testament as relieving, in any degree, the dark and corrupt state of the Gentile world.

Verse 23. *And changed the glory, &c.*—God is here called *incorruptible* in contrast with, and in implied contempt of the deities of the heathen. All matter changes and decays, but God is THE SAME; all spirits depend upon him "who only hath immortality," who only hath it in himself, who is the fountain of it to others, and can restrain the stream of life when he pleases, and annihilate the highest and most powerful being he has created. But the deities of the heathen were not even spiritual substances. These invisible deities were imaginary; and therefore the apostle, in another place says, "An idol is nothing in the world;" they were truly *corruptible* things, as men, beasts, insects, or corruptible images of these corruptible things. The *glory* of the incorruptible God is a lofty expression. It must be equal to this vast attribute of incorruptibility itself. How many other great and boundless perfections are implied in this self-existence, this having

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

life in himself, and being the fountain of it to every thing beside that lives throughout the universe, surpasses all human conception; but it is evident that all conceivable natural and moral perfection must be involved in it. Hence he was revealed from the first ages to the patriarchs of all nations, as eternal, all-sufficient, almighty, omnipresent, immutable, infinite in knowledge and in holiness, goodness and justice, infinitely perfect. These constituted those GLORIES in which he at one time stood revealed to the whole Gentile world; and which they darkened and voluntarily hid from themselves by their idolatry. Thus *they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man*; the sense of which is, not as Macknight and others take it, that they misrepresented the perfections of God by variously devised images, making the evil of heathen idolatry to consist in setting up images of men and beasts in their temples, as representations of the Deity. For the fact is, not that God was misrepresented, but displaced and neglected; so that he was not in any sense, as the apostle above says, "worshipped as God." The single verb must here be taken as its compound in verse 25: *Who changed*, exchanged, *the truth of God*, εν, *with a lie*, gave up one for the other; and so here they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God with images of men and beasts, took the one for the other, renounced the true God, and surrendered their trust and affections, by the most degrading infatuation that ever befell the human race, wholly to idols. There is a great difference between the Apostle Paul and many of his commentators and other writers. They choose to throw a somewhat softer shade over the idolatries of the heathen, and, by taking their images to be, in various ways, representatives of the Divinity himself, hold up their idolatrous systems rather as embodying the worship of the true God under mistaken forms, than as something wholly distinct from it. The apostle, however, does not take this view; nor do any of the writers of the Old and New Testament. They uniformly consider idolatry as the renunciation of the true God, and as the transfer of all honour and trust from him to OTHER objects. Whether in the first rise of idolatry, God and his operations might not be symbolized, and the grand evil be brought in under this pretence, it is scarcely worth while to inquire. For many ages the Gentile idolatry had remained in the state in which it was found by St. Paul, and he regards it as an entire renunciation of the true God. Nor does he sanction any distinction between the worship of the thing represented by the image, and the image itself, as many of those do who incline to palliate at least the "more elegant" idolatries of antiquity. The distinction is indeed futile; for although the image, before consecration, might be treated as common matter, yet after that ceremony the god or sacred being whom it was made to represent, was supposed to take possession of it, to be actually present with it, and mysteriously to identify it with himself; so that the regards of the worshipper went no higher than the image thus deified, so far at least as the mass of the people were concerned. We may add to this, that a great part of pagan idolatry was not even so refined as this; since many objects were considered as sacred *in themselves*, and as having power over the fortunes of men, for which no reason at all could be given by referring them to any distinct invisible demon; and the assumed sacredness rested on no better or more distinct ground than the power ascribed to charms and incantations.

And creeping things.—The crocodile and scarabœus in Egypt, and serpents almost everywhere. The worship of the serpent is a curious fact and has given rise to much elaborate investigation, both as to the extent and character of the practice, and the reason on which it might be founded. Nothing very satisfactory, as to the latter, has been elicited, beyond the general conclusion that it is a species of devil worship; and under this form probably the grand deceiver of the nations succeeded to transfer Divine honour to himself, and thus to revel in the degradation of mankind.

Verse 24. *God also gave them up to uncleanness.*—To *give up* is more than simply to permit, as some render it. It implies a withdrawal of slighted means of instruction, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit, provoked to depart from men by their determined wickedness. By not renewing his revelations among them, as in the earliest ages; by raising up no prophets accredited from him with the power of working miracles; and "suffering them," with little interposition, "to walk in their own ways,"—this awful judicial "giving up" of the heathen was marked. Still the light was not extinguished. God "left not himself without witness" among them, and by improving the knowledge they had they might have been led back to God.

Farther, they were given up *to uncleanness*. The connection of uncleanness with idolatry, from the earliest ages, is a striking fact, and it holds good in all places; and in many of the forms of the most ancient idolatry lewdness was an essential part of the

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like * to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to †a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

* Or, *to acknowledge.*

† Or, *a mind void of judgment.*

religious rites. The fact seems to be, that though the origin of idolatry is involved in much obscurity; (and many writers have attempted to render it as respectable as possible;) that it sprung wholly from sensuality, and was from the first a wicked contrivance to bring religion over to the side of vice; and that, the restraint once broken down, it soon took the form of the most abominable pollutions. Hence idolatry, with reference to its demoralizing effect, is called, by God himself, "that abominable thing which I hate." From a people so sensualized God withdrew his Spirit, and so gave them up that their sin might be their punishment. As to the shocking immoralities charged upon them by St. Paul, it is enough to say that in every particular his testimony is confirmed by their own historians, poets, and satirists; and the character of modern idolatry abundantly confirms this account of the ancient. The charges lay as well against their most illustrious princes, statesmen, warriors, and philosophers, as the meanest of the common people; and indeed the former exceeded the latter in every species of the most abominable impurities. It is enough to refer to the confirmation of St. Paul's charges, without staining the page by the quotations at length.

Verse 25. *The truth of God into a lie.*—Αληθεια τυ Θευ is here used for Θεος αληθινος, the true God, and ψευδος, *a lie*, equivalent to שֶׁקֶר, for an idol, as in Jeremiah xiii, 25. This was the wretched exchange they made, the true God for a false one, that is, no God at all; one to whom it was false to ascribe existence under that character, and all whose pretences to aid and bless must therefore be necessarily vanity and lies. A similar, though not so gross an exchange, do they make who forget God, and trust wholly for help and felicity in earthly things.

And worshipped and served, &c.—Worship relates to the verbal offering of praise and petitions, accompanied with reverential postures; service includes sacrifices, oblations, and ceremonies.

More than the Creator.—This is another proof that the apostle did not consider these idolaters as worshipping and serving the Creator in and by the creature, though imperfectly and erroneously; for whether we take the words παρα τον κτισαντα as signifying *more than* the Creator, or *to the prejudice of* the Creator, he is excluded from his rightful honour in the degree in which idolatry prevailed. The worship of idols *took the place* of the worship of God.

Who is blessed for ever.—This is the manner of the pious Jews, who could not allude to any dishonour done to God without taking occasion from it to proclaim his praises with renewed ardour, and to declare him blessed, that is, worthy of the sole blessing, homage, worship, love, and service of his creatures, for ever.

Verse 27. *That recompense of their error.*—If πλανης, error, refers to idolatry generally, then the sense is, that it was fitly punished by these awful consequences upon the morals of society; so that it has proved the heaviest conceivable curse to all nations addicted to it. The kingdom given up to the basest idolatries was Egypt; and it has been for ages, in the language of prophecy, "the basest of kingdoms;" and other instances of national retribution as striking may be marked upon the page of history. Πλανης may, however, be taken more strictly for the *guilt* of the previously mentioned immoralities, and especially those in which there was the strongest deviation from the proper bounds and course of nature; and *the recompense which was meet* were those terrible and peculiar diseases by which God has been pleased to signalize his vengeance against such crimes in all ages.

Verse 28. *As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.*—After all the attempts to improve this translation, it stands as an instance of forcible and truly English rendering, not to be mended. *They did not like to retain* the true knowledge of God by remembering what had been handed down respecting him from their fathers, and by teaching it to their children, and by public services and institutions endeavoring to preserve it. They neglected this because they had no liking to the subject, or, in other words, were averse to a truth so holy and reproving to their vices. Thus the infidelity and ignorance of men are again traced to the heart, its true source in all ages. Macknight

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant-

renders, "And as they did not approve of holding God with acknowledgment," that is, as he explains, the statesmen and philosophers did not approve of God being the object of the people's acknowledgment; and preferred therefore to foster the popular idolatry. By this narrow interpretation was influenced by his unfounded notion, that St. Paul is speaking in this chapter, chiefly of the pagan legislators and philosophers. This is certainly contradicted, as above observed, both by the apostle's argument and the internal evidence. It is of the mass of the Gentiles that he speaks; and of that mass it may most truly be said, that *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, or those great and hallowing thoughts, arising out of the true knowledge of God, could not have so entirely faded away. Noble as this subject of knowledge is, it is easily retained by all who delight in it; and the loss of it proves the disaffection of the heart toward it.

Gave them over to a reprobate mind.—The giving up here partly expresses the non-interposition of God to prevent the natural consequence of their love of error, which must be still more entangled and deepened error, and consequently sin; for religious errors, being embraced because they are favourable to vice, the vicious effects mature with their growth; and partly the judicial withdrawment of direct means of instruction and correction. Thus they were left to *a reprobate*, a bad, *mind*; for ἀδοκιμος is used of counterfeit silver, and land which yields nothing but thorns. It is not the intellectual so much as the *moral* quality of the mind that is here spoken of, as what follows sufficiently shows. There is no warrant therefore to render it "an unsearching, injudicious mind;" and much less to look in this passage for any countenance to Calvinistic reprobation.

Not convenient.—Things unsuitable to human nature, and which violate it: a meiosis.

Verses 29-31. *Being filled with all unrighteousness, &c.—Filled*, not slightly or occasionally affected. *Unrighteousness* is here injustice: *fornication*, πορνεια, every species of uncleanness: *wickedness*, πονηρια, appears to signify mischievous craft and subtlety, the kind of wickedness for which the devil is eminent, and hence called ὁ πονηρος, "the wicked one:" *covetousness*, the excessive desire to have, either to spend or to hoard, and the gratification of the passion by appropriating the goods of others to their own use: *maliciousness*, κακια, an implacable and revengeful habit of mind: *full*, μεστους, another strong word to show how completely these evils had possession of their hearts, and how mature and rife they were in society: *debate*, ερίδος, strife: *deceit*, δολον, craft: *malignity*, maliciousness before mentioned, and κακοηθειας, more properly signifies putting the worst construction upon any thing, and so being the more readily excited to acts of violence and revenge: *whisperers*, secret insinuators of calumny: *backbiters*, those who openly calumniate when the injured party is absent: *haters of God*, Koppe and others render "hated by God," which sense the word admits; but this is scarcely a description of character; whereas in proportion as men become vicious, their hatred of God and true religion becomes conspicuous, they are hated for their very purity: *despiteful*, ὑβριστας, insolent in words and deeds: *proud*, treating with haughty contempt all those supposed to be beneath them: *boasters*, arrogating to themselves and their country the most honourable qualities, and ascribing their good fortune to their own merits: *inventors of evil things*, of new sins or modes of sinning, especially of unlawful pleasures, so that by some of their sensualists rewards were offered for the discovery of a new pleasure: *disobedient to parents*, to which there would be, from the mere force of natural instinct, many exceptions; but in every age, and among every people so corrupt in morals, this must have been the effect to a frightful extent: *without understanding*, ασυνετους, a word which has cost interpreters some trouble, because deficiency of understanding cannot be well reckoned among the vices; but there is no need to run into strained meanings of the word, since, in its obvious signification, it is sufficiently expressive of the intention of the apostle.—A want of understanding, that is, of discernment and prudence, is one of the uniform and most marked effects of an entire abandonment to vicious habits; the judgment becomes inattentive to the nature and consequences of things, darkened and perverted on all moral subjects, so that "darkness is put for light and light for darkness, good for evil and evil for good:" this is not a misfortune, but an awfully vicious state of mind, and characteristic therefore of the moral state of these enormous offenders. *Covenant-breakers: without natural affection*, where we may suppose he alludes to the exposure of infants, the frequent brutal treatment of near relations whom they were bound to cherish, and the neglect of parents in their old age: *impla-*

breakers, * without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but † have pleasure in them that do them.

* Or, *unsociable.*

† Or, *consent with them.*

cable, ασπονδος is one who refuses to join in those libations which were the tokens of peace and friendship; hence it signifies one who will enter into no agreement, who refuses to lay aside his quarrels, but maintains perpetual enmity with those who have offended him: *unmerciful*, remorseless, without pity; which was sufficiently proved by the sanguinary character of their wars, their slaughter of human beings for sport in their forums, and the reckless barbarities they inflicted upon their slaves.

Verse 32. *The judgment of God.*—God's judicial decision as contained in his law.—This law was never entirely obliterated among them; and therefore they are said to *know the judgment*, το δικαιωμα, of God, which doomed to death all committing such things. Nevertheless, in defiance of the threat, they not only practised them, but *took delight* in them that did so; each being recommended to the other by the very excess of his vices, so that not only was there no effort made to stay this downward course of corruption, but it was encouraged by the example and influence of all ranks.

The question which arises out of this description of the corrupt state of the Gentiles, is, For what purpose is it introduced? It could not be to give information to the Roman Christians themselves, who lived in the midst of all the abominations referred to, and were too well acquainted with the manner of their city; nor was the design to give information to future times, by a historical record of the manners of the age. The apostle does not write historically; and he knew well that in both Greek and Roman authors all these evils had been dwelt upon too fully and too frequently for the memory of them to be lost. This view of the pagan world is a part of his great argument. He lays it down that the Gospel is a Divine provision for man's salvation; that every sinful man needs it, because "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men;" and that the whole Gentile world needed it, because they were all actually offenders, (of which the state of morals among them was a universal proof,) and as such *worthy of death.* This is the connection of this black catalogue of pagan immoralities with his argument. But it may be said, that the actual vices of the age when the apostle lived, an age confessedly of great degeneracy, could only prove the need of the people of that day of this saving institution; which is too narrow a ground on which to build an argument in favour of the universal necessity of the Gospel. Certainly the apostle must be allowed to assume, that forgetting God, and setting up idolatries and superstitions, are crimes everywhere, and in all ages, and such as produce overt acts of immorality. And this is indisputable; so that the argument of the apostle as to the actual guilt and judicial danger of the Gentile world cannot be impaired by alleging that he only looked at the state of society in his own day. That is doubtless true; but he refers to it only as an obvious and mature manifestation of the effect of the departure of mankind from God. The same idolatries are traceable, by veritable history, up at least to near the time of Abraham, to the nations of Canaan, Egypt, Chaldea, &c. They mingle themselves with the highest antiquity, and exhibit themselves in similar immoralities, though varying in degree as to the grossest of them, in different ages. And if we contemplate the subsequent history of idolatry, wherever this rejection of the knowedge of the true God, and the introduction of false worship, has prevailed,—and it has prevailed UNIVERSALLY except where it has been displaced by the Gospel,—there it has originated nothing but vice, mental and sensual; and therefore it has placed all men everywhere under *wrath*, the δικαιωμα, or *sentence*, of God, of which the apostle speaks; and thus the argument as a universal one is established. The Greeks and Romans were under condemnation for these vices; these vices both comprehended and sprung from the sin of rejecting the knowledge of God, and the truths necessarily connected with it: but the Gentiles of every age, and everywhere, were proved, by the universal prevalence of idolatry, to have departed from God in like manner; they had therefore placed themselves under the polluting influence of the same errors, exhibited the same general character of vice, were in the same condemnation, objects of the same "revealed wrath of God;" and to them therefore the Gospel was both absolutely necessary as a dispensation of grace and mercy, and worthy of all acceptation from its evidence, suitableness, and glorious sufficiency.

CHAPTER II.

1 They that sin, though they condemn it in others, cannot excuse themselves, 6 and much less escape the judgment of God, 9 whether they be Jews or Gentiles. 14 The Gentiles cannot escape, 17 nor yet the Jews, 25 whom their circumcision shall not profit, if they keep not the law.

1 THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: [a] for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and

[a] St. Matthew, chap. vii, 2.

CHAPTER II. Verse 1. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, &c.*—The majority of commentators, ancient and modern, consider these words addressed to the Jews, as distinguished from the Gentiles. Certainly the discourse in the subsequent verses is expressly addressed to them; and the transaction is best fixed here, although the Jews are not mentioned by name. That he now turns to his own countrymen, is also made clear, from his founding his address upon that severity of judgment against the Gentiles, in which we know that they indulged: *Thou art inexcusable, O man, that judgest*, pronouncest censure and condemnation upon the Gentiles. For not only was the phrase, "sinners of the Gentiles," continually in the haughty lips of that self-righteous people, but they regarded all the Gentiles as liable to eternal punishment. The *judging* of which the apostle speaks does not agree so well to the Gentiles; for it implies much more than the reproofs of moralists, the lash of satirists, and the occasional restraints put upon many vices by magistrates. They judged in the sense of condemning, as the context will show; they loudly and openly, among themselves, spoke of them as obnoxious to the wrath of God, both in this and another life. In this view διο, *wherefore*, must be considered as merely marking, not a conclusion from what precedes, but a transition to another but yet cognate branch of the argument; for it was equally necessary, in laying down the claims of the Gospel to universal acceptance, that the sinfulness and danger of the Jews should also be established.

Thou condemnest thyself.—The apostle gives great spirit to the discourse by singling out an individual Jew, and addressing him personally, as the representative of the rest. In the very act of *judging or condemning another*, τον ετερον, the other, the Gentile, *thou condemnest thyself*, thou declarest thyself also liable to the future wrath of God, *for thou doest the same things.*—The immoralities of the Jews the apostle does not attempt to prove. This is important to mark, in order to ascertain the connection of what follows. He knew that they could not deny very gross corruption of manners,—not generally to the same extent as the Gentiles; but all the pagan immoralities were more or less known among them, and all the ordinary vices, mental and sensual, of unrenewed nature. He does not deny the existence of virtuous persons either among Jews or Gentiles; but he speaks of the mass as practically sinful, which was a matter of notoriety, and in fact proves every thing; for it needs nothing more being granted than that the majority of men in all ages have been corrupt, to prove that this necessarily implies the fall of human nature itself, and the corruption, in the largest sense, of THE HUMAN HEART. What of real virtue there was among Jews or Gentiles is to be traced to another source, of which we shall just now speak.

Although, however, St. Paul charges the Jews with practical sinfulness as well as the Gentiles, and by not stopping to offer any proof indicates that they neither could nor were disposed to deny the charge, he effected little by establishing that fact to convince them of the necessity and value of the Gospel, considered as a divinely instituted means of salvation, so long as they believed that, notwithstanding their offences, they were on account of their privileges religiously safe. This indeed was the current and generally received doctrine; and it is the key to the meaning of the verses that follow. It was their fatal delusion, as it has been that of professed Christians in later times; and therefore the apostle assails it in the most solemn and powerful manner.

Verses 2, 3. *The judgment of God, &c.*—The sentence of God in his law, whether the moral law as it existed from the beginning, or as preserved more exactly among the Jews, and which all acknowledge to connect punishment with sin, is, *we know*, we all agree, *according to truth;* that is, the threatenings of God are seriously uttered, as well as his promises; they are not words without meaning, but TRUE declarations of the pur-

doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suf-

poses of the Lawgiver. Those who render "according to *justice*," or "are without partiality," miss the point. The Jews acknowledged the faithfulness and truth of God in his law; and having conceded that, the apostle avails himself of it to bring the convincing question which follows to bear upon their consciences. *And thinkest thou this, O man, that condemnest another, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God*,—this very judgment or sentence which thou acknowledgest, by contending for the Divine authority of the law to be *according to truth*; to be declared with perfect sincerity, as by "the God of truth?"

Verse 4. *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness? &c.*—Here the apostle goes to the root of the error: the Jews drew this false hope of impunity, and complete exception from the threatenings of the law, from *the goodness of God* to them as a people. We see this delusion opened in the discourse of John the Baptist. He preached repentance for their sins, and enforced it by setting before them "the wrath to come;" and, knowing that they would steel their hearts against his exhortations, and hide their danger from themselves by referring to their peculiar national covenant, he cries out, "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," &c. The doctrine which in that age they endeavoured corruptly to maintain and diffuse was, that no Israelite could be finally lost. Thus they encouraged themselves in sin and hardness of heart. This St. Paul calls *despising the riches of his goodness*. This is in his favourite but peculiar way of expressing himself. Of a similar use of the term *riches*, to mark exuberance and abundance in the strongest sense, his epistles afford many examples, and show the manner in which he was impressed with the benevolent character of God, and how well he comprehended the mighty import of its manifestation in his dispensations of grace, whether under the law or the Gospel. The riches of the goodness of God, as to the Jews, to which he refers, comprehends all those religious advantages, as well as other benefits, they had derived from their peculiar relation to him, by virtue of the covenant with Abraham; but with the apostle they were all connected with their true end, their salvation. It was in this that the riches of the goodness of God consisted, that provision had been specially made among them for the obtaining of pardon, the sanctifying influences of grace, and a title to the heavenly inheritance; they had therefore express moral instruction, a system of authorized propitiations, a typical service, and promises of a resurrection unto eternal life. To these eminent proofs of goodness, he adds *forbearance*, ανοχη, enduring much disobedience, rebellion, and perverseness, before he issues his threatening, and declares his determination to punish.—*Long suffering* differs from *forbearance* in this, that it seems to have respect to the delay of the threatened punishment, so as to show reluctance to execute it, and to give opportunities of repentance. Of this the Jewish history had many affecting examples: and while the apostle wrote, the nation was indeed under sentence, the sentence passed by our Lord himself; yet had it been singularly delayed, and the space filled with calls to repentance and overtures of reconciliation. To make therefore this goodness of God, as expressing itself in the gift of superior religious advantages, and in long bearing with their offences, so as not to be hasty to deprive them of them, an argument for continuing to sin against God, under the pretence that his very kindness showed that he made them exceptions from his displeasure, was a manifest despising of the goodness of God, which is the import of the word καταφρονειν; for as the whole proceeded from unworthy notions of God's goodness, as though it could be a weak favouritism, and connive at sin in particular persons and nations, that glorious attribute was in THE EFFECT contemned and despised; it had an unworthy motive assigned to it, which heightened the offences themselves it was resorted to to excuse.

Not knowing that the goodness of God, &c.—Not to *know*, is here, as in many places, *not to consider*, so as to attain and be suitably impressed with the truth, that *the goodness of God leadeth*, αγει, draws and allures, *thee to repentance*.—Whatever displays of the benevolence of God take place as to sinners have a moral design, which is surely not to encourage them in their rebellion, but to lead them to repentance, by placing before them the gracious character of God, and affecting their hearts by it; for by this their sins are at once shown to be unnatural, and odiously ungrateful, and the hope of clemency is indicated, without which there can be no such repentance as springs from any nobler affection than fear. The judgments of God appeal to the fears; the goodness of God to gratitude, and hope, and self abhorrence; and is intended to soften the heart, and to produce contrition, real sorrow and shame for sin, and strong desires to be delivered from the degradation of its pollution, as well as the terror of its punishment. Such was the use which the Jews ought to have made

fering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart [b] treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 [c] Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance

[b] James v, 3.

[c] Psalm lxii, 12; Matt. xvi, 27; Rev. xxii, 12.

of the goodness of God; but they abused it, to lull their consciences to sleep, as do Antinomians, under a notion of their being the peculiar favourites of God; and those who attach an unscriptural importance to the sacraments of the Christian Church, as though they placed them in some mystical covenant relation to God, scarcely by any means to be forfeited, although their lives should be spent in the practice of vice, and the habit of their affections be that of a worldly estrangement from God, do the same thing.

Verse 5. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, &c.*—This is still in the way of solemn expostulation, under a deep sense of the fatal character of the delusion charged upon them. The state of the heart guilty of this error is described to be *hard* and *impenitent*. And it is impossible to conceive of a state of the feelings more obdurate and perverse than exists in those who take occasion habitually to sin from the very *goodness* of the Being sinned against. *Hardness*, which is not moved by so many and constant proofs of God's hatred to sin, and his severity in punishing it, which everywhere surround them; and remained unaffected by that very kindness and condescension of God which they celebrate in their sacred songs, and of which they boast as so abundant toward themselves as a people. It awakened no generous sentiment, no gratitude, no soft remorse. From this obduracy impenitence followed; for, so long as their consciences were lulled to sleep by these delusions, they were incapable of repentance or godly sorrow for sin. Such persons are represented as *treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, laying up wrath as in a storehouse through a whole life of repeated offences, until the final day of account, which is called the *day of wrath*, as to them and to all sinful men, because of the full and unmitigated infliction of the punishment due to their offences, which shall then take place; and then, with respect to all, *a day of the revelation of* the *righteous judgment of God*, when there shall be an illustrious display of the perfect equity and justice of the decisions of the Judge of the whole earth, before angels and men. However severe, therefore, the future and endless punishment of the wicked may now appear to any, we are, on this awful subject, to recollect that we know the case very imperfectly, but that the last day shall be a day of *revelation* as well as judicial decision, and that the subject of this revelation will be the righteousness of this very judgment, to express which the apostle appears to have formed the expressive compound word δικαιοκρισια.

Verse 6. *Who will render to every man, &c.*—This necessarily follows from the appointment of a day of general judgment, and from the righteous character of the Judge, both which the Jews admitted; but this admission, like the other above pressed upon them by the apostle, was fatal to their infatuated conclusion. They depended upon their own safety, as Israelites, although they acknowledged they were obnoxious as sinners; but, if God will render to every man according to his deeds; if, in other words, a man's works, not his national or Church privileges, are to be taken into account at that day, except as the latter may aggravate the guilt of the offences committed, then could the sinful Jew have no hope. The very principles of that better system of religion of which he boasted subverted his hopes of impunity. This exact process of strict reward he proceeds to describe in language of great force and beauty.

Verse 7. *To them who by patient continuance, &c.—Continuance in well doing*, and especially *patient* continuance, as it supposes opposition, difficulties, and sometimes persecution, manfully sustained and overcome, necessarily implies such a habit as arises from a renewed nature. Nor, indeed, are we to confine the *well doing* to such acts as are visible to men, but to God also, to secret good actions, to the efforts of the soul toward God, and the right government and exercise of the affections, as faith, hope, and love. Those who urge this in proof of justification by works usually take too narrow a view of the case. The *doing* is *well doing*, which must be in principle, as well as in overt act; and therefore must either be the result of an innocent, unfallen nature, which man has not; or a renewed nature, which proceeds only from the grace of God's Holy Spirit. This, therefore, if Jew or Gentile, was necessary to well doing; for God cannot be supposed to reward the semblance of virtue. This renewed and holy habit, therefore, being the result of that gracious constitution under which all men are placed by the economy of redemption, and implying, as it necessarily must, the previous restoration of such persons to the Divine favour through

in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the * Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the † Gentile:

* Greek, *Greek.*

† Greek, *Greek.*

the Mediator, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," this justification at the last day is placed on its true ground: it can but be declaratory of a previous state of acceptance and approval attained through the joint effect of a constitution of grace and mercy, and man's availing himself of it, according to the degree of his knowledge of it. But, in fact, it will be seen that the apostle chiefly uses the term justification in the simple sense of the pardon of sin; and justification at the last day, in the sense of the forgiveness of sin, we are forbidden by the tenor of Scripture to admit. Sin must be forgiven here; and man must die in a state of reconciliation with God, or he dies without hope. "If ye die in your sins, where I am ye cannot come."

Seek for glory, &c.—A grand and noble distinction is here put between the pious and others, in all ages. The former may have been comparatively few, and many instances have been contemned and persecuted among men; but what exaltation does real religion give to the human character! The earthly minded grovel amid the gross and fleeting pleasures and vain distinctions of a perishing life; but the pious *seek glory, honour, and immortality*, as they pass through the same scenes of life as others; their hearts are on higher objects; they hold communion with glorious hopes; and they seek these high realities of eternity through a course of holy obedience and preparation. Some think the three terms, *glory*, *honour*, and *immortality*, synonymous; but there is doubtless a distinction. The *glory* has respect to that now inaccessible light and splendour in which God dwells, and which constitutes the locality of the heavenly world; the *honour*, the favour of God, and the distinctions it may confer upon them; the *immortality* includes both the resurrection of the body with deathless qualities, and the unfading character of every enjoyment. The *glory* stands opposed to that distance from God's presence in which they now are; the *honour*, to their lowly and often calumniated condition; and the *immortality*, to death, from which good men are not yet freed. Now, upon all those who *seek* these things in preference to earthly ones, and in the way of righteous obedience to the Divine will, *eternal life*, which includes them all, shall in that day be conferred. For it is to be observed that, in the New Testament, the term *eternal life* does never barely signify perpetuity of being, but of that felicitous existence which springs from admission into the presence of God, and from the fulfilment of all those promises relative to a future life which are made in the New Testament to the redeemed and saved.

Verse 8. *But unto them that are contentious.*—Contention, *εριθεια*, being here mentioned in conjunction with *not obeying the truth*, the sense is manifest. The contentious here are not those who strive with one another, but those who oppose, resist, and fight against the truth of God, as revealed in different dispensations to them. This is also a general description of sinful men. No man can continue in sin without resisting the open voice, or the secret impression of truth. And he that obeys not that, will *obey unrighteousness*.

Indignation and wrath.—Terrible words, when referred to God the Judge, and probably taken from Psalm lxxviii, 49, "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation." *Θυμος* and *οργη* are words nearly of the same import, though the latter is thought, by some writers, to express a more permanent emotion. Taken together the emphasis is heightened, and *θυμος* probably was intended to express the principle of Divine wrath, and *οργη*, its punitive manifestations. After *indignation and wrath*, it is necessary to understand *shall be rendered*, in order to complete the sense.

Verse 9. *Tribulation and anguish, &c.*—In this and the following verse, the same doctrine as to the exact distribution of rewards and punishments is repeated, but so as to exclude all possibility of evading the meaning. *Tribulation* and *anguish*, or distress, are words which seem to heighten the terribleness of the punishment: the expression, *every soul of man*, is not idiomatic, but is used emphatically to show that there are no exceptions from the rule, as the wicked Jews vainly hoped in their own case; which is still more explicitly laid down by adding *of the Jew first*,—so far from being exempt from punishment because he is a Jew, he shall be first condemned and most severely punished, as being first in the order of privilege. On the other hand, as to the pious Jews, who have improved their superior advantage, they shall be first in the rewards of another life. The same rule now holds good

11 For [d] there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

[d] Deut. x, 17; 1 Chron. xix, 7; Job xxxiv, 19; Acts x, 34; Gal. ii, 6; Ephesians vi, 9; Col. iii, 25; 1 Peter i, 17.

as to Christians and Gentiles; for we have taken the place of the Jewish Church.

Verse 11. *For there is no respect of persons with God.*—The προσωποληψια, respect of persons, refers to judicial proceedings: and to one being favoured in preference to another, not because of the merit of his cause, but through the weakness or corruptness of the judge,—his weakness in being subject to blinding prejudices and partial affections, or his corrupt regard to the power or favour of the great. The doctrine of the Jews, that, though wicked, they should be exempt from punishment in another life, merely because they were the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ascribed this, a weak prejudice and a blinding partial affection, to God, to the detriment of his righteous and equal character as "Judge of the whole earth." The great principle of the JUDICIAL IMPARTIALITY of God, the apostle here asserts, both as the conclusion of what he had already said, and as a principle which he proposed still farther to illustrate.

Verse 12. *For as many as have sinned without law.*—Sinning ανομως, *without law* being here opposed to sinning εν νομω, in or under the law: by law, must be understood revealed law, or the law as contained in the Jewish Scriptures. That the Gentiles were not without all knowledge of the law or will of God, he afterward shows; so that he could not here mean to say that they were absolutely without all law, but without that revealed law by which, he immediately adds, the Jews would be judged. Their *perishing without law* also confirms this. The great scriptural principle is, that "where there is no law there is no transgression:" and if no transgression, no punishment for transgression. But the Gentiles are said to SIN; therefore there existed among them a law; and a LAW made known, or knowable, or it could be no law to them; for a law not knowable is equivalent to a law not in existence; and they are said to PERISH in consequence of their sin, so that they were under a law having force and efficacy. It follows, therefore, that by *the law* in this verse, the apostle means the law as it was made known to the Jews.

It has been remarked that, if the sense in which St. Paul uses the term LAW, in this epistle, were always explicitly marked, it would conduce much to the better understanding of his meaning. This is doubtless just; but we appear to have no other means of determining that but attending carefully to the argument. It has been attempted to clear this matter by the help of the insertion or omission of the Greek article; and indeed this variation, which is sometimes seen in the same sentence, can scarcely have been without design; but no rule has hitherto been suggested which can be carried with satisfaction through all the passages which occur; and we are left to the conclusion that the use of the Greek article by the writers of the New Testament is still involved in great obscurity. The opinion that the word *law*, when used by St. Paul without the article, signifies the moral law, and when used with it includes the whole law, moral and ceremonial, will by no means abide the test of the different passages; and were we to allow that the apostle has any respect in his argument to the ceremonial law, the exceptions would break down the rule. But it appears in the sequel that it is the moral law only from which the apostle argues, that law by which, as he says, "is the knowledge of sin," on the punishment or forgiveness of which he mainly discourses.

It is more plausible to refer *law*, without the article, to any kind of intimation of the Divine will, whether by tradition or otherwise; and with the article, to the Jewish law, in whole or part. But this rule cannot be carried strictly through, though it holds good in part; and all that appears clear is, that the apostle often, but not uniformly, uses the article emphatically, and thus makes a distinction which otherwise would employ several words, between moral law in general, and that revelation of it with which the Jews were favoured. To the import of the leading term LAW, as it occurs in this epistle, our attention will be again more fully required.

Verse 13. *For not the hearers of the law, &c.*—Our translators place this, as well as the two following verses, in a parenthesis; but this tends to obscure the meaning. For that this verse stands in immediate connection with the preceding, is evident from its containing the reason why those who have "sinned under the" Jewish "law," shall be "judged" or condemned by it, in opposition to the delusive notion which he is controverting, that the mere possession of superior external privileges by any, lays a ground of exemption from punishment, although their offences may in strictness deserve it. Such persons he denominates *hearers of the law*, that is, hearers only; those who have enjoyed the express revelation of the moral law or will of God, and yet have not obeyed.

13 (For [e] not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which show the work of the law

[e] Matt. vii, 21; James i, 22.

And as those words are to be connected with the preceding verse, so the 16th verse follows them, leaving the 14th and 15th in a parenthesis. The whole passage will therefore read, *For not the hearers of the law are just*, are esteemed just persons, *before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.* To be *justified* here signifies not to be forgiven, which is an act of grace done on earth, but stands in opposition to being *condemned.* Nor is it a declaration of innocence; for the whole evangelical system rests upon the actual guilt and danger of all who shall finally be saved, and the provision made for their pardon in the present life.—Our justification at the last day can, therefore, only be considered as declaratory of what from its nature was before a secret between the justified and their God, and a public acceptance of them and dealing with them as righteous.

Verses 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles, &c.*—The true parenthesis includes only these verses; for that the connection breaks off from the preceding verse, is clear from this, that the Gentiles could in no sense be said to be *hearers* of the law, the persons of whom the apostle had just spoken. The important passage thus parenthetically introduced, appears to have been designed to answer a tacit objection of this kind:—It may be true that not the mere hearers but only the doers of the law will be accepted of God at last; but how then shall Gentiles be saved at the last day, since they are not even hearers of the law? This question the apostle answers: To do by nature φυσει, *the things of the law*, is to do what the revealed law prescribes, without the advantage of that express revelation of it which the Jews had: for amid all the various illustrations of the phrase, "by nature," which critics have collected from classical and Hellenistic Greek writers, one has been generally overlooked, contained in this very epistle, chap. xi, 24, "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is *wild by nature*, and wert grafted *contrary to nature* into a good olive tree," &c., where a cultivated and an uncultivated tree are made by the apostle the emblems of the pagan Gentiles and the Jews. That natural state of the Gentiles of which he speaks in the text stands equally opposed to the Church state of the Jews, as in the passage just cited, and signifies the condition of all those nations to whom God had not made express and successive revelations of his will, and taken as his people under the cultivation of an appointed ministry and regular ordinances.

The things contained in the law.—More simply *the things of the law*, the things enjoined by the law, the worship, fear, and love of God; justice, charity, truth, and mercy; if not with so clear a knowledge of their distinctions, or so perfectly, as good men under the law, yet substantially and with entire sincerity.

These not having a law, &c.—Not having a WRITTEN law, (for so the argument obliges us to understand the apostle,) are not indeed without law, but *are a law to themselves;* that is, the law as written on their hearts is their law; and as they bear it about with them, and possess no external visible record of it, like the Jews in their tables of stone and sacred books, they are said to be a law to themselves.

Which show the work of the law written on their hearts.—The *work* is not that which is written on the heart; for that is said to be *showed;* it is therefore a visible thing, and consists in acts of noticeable conformity to the same moral rules as the Jews directly received from God. But that which is *written on their hearts* is *the law;* of the fact of the existence of which so written, the *work* spoken of is one of the proofs. In this phrase, *the law written on the heart*, and the law written on tables of stone and in the Jewish Scriptures, are not indeed contrasted, but distinguished; for the law is the same law, though under different modes of manifestation. Of the existence of this law delineated upon the hearts of the Gentiles, two proofs are adduced: 1. The existence of *conscience* among them. This cannot be denied; the power of it is often adverted to by their writers, and expressed with great force; but conscience necessarily supposes both a knowledge of the fact to which it is to *bear witness*, and of the rule by which its moral quality is to be determined, and of the authority of that rule as Divine, or there could be no painful apprehension of punishment. The second proof is, that not only did conscience give its condemning or approving *witness* in the bosom of each individual, but that in their *reasonings* and disputes they either *accused* or *excused*, condemned or acquitted, each other with reference to different acts or courses of action. This also could not be denied; for moral approbation or moral censure was continually

written in their hearts, their *conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts † the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another ;)

* Or, *The conscience witnessing with them.*

† Or, *between themselves.*

called forth in their intercourse with each other; and amid all the perversions of men's minds, on moral subjects, in the Gentile world, yet do we see certain crimes condemned there, as well as among the Jews; and certain virtues recognized and applauded. "The words *μεταξυ αλληλων*," says Bloomfield, "should not be rendered *meanwhile*," &c., nor with Macknight, "between one another; but, with the Vulgate, *inter se invicem*." But this is the same thing as the *conscience bearing witness;* the argument would indeed be the same, though somewhat less cogent; but it seems preferable to take *μεταξυ αλληλων των λογισμων* in the sense of their reasonings or debates with one another, either on the subject of good or evil, or as estimating each other's character, or dealing out their censures or their praises. The whole proved that they had moral knowledge; consequently that they were morally responsible, and capable of rewards or punishments at the last day; which is what the apostle intended to show in illustration of the rectitude of the proceedings of the general judgment.

From this passage of St. Paul respecting the Gentiles, many erroneous conclusions have been drawn. Here it has been pretended we see the foundation of natural religion, and the sufficiency of unassisted reason to discover the existence of God, and to arrive at the knowledge of his will; "therefore there is a law of nature which is a true guide." This and many other things of the same kind have been said, without adverting to the fact, that the moral law of God is older than its revelation to the Jews, and more extensive than the boundaries of one people; that Noah, THE PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and an INSPIRED man, was the teacher of this law to his sons; that it descended to all the families which sprung from him, that is, to all the families of the earth; that indirectly, though not directly, the revelations to the Jews glanced their beams upon all the surrounding nations, the greatest and most populous states of antiquity; and that consequently none of the people of whom St. Paul more particularly speaks had ever been left to their own reason to discover God, or the leading rules of moral law. He speaks not indeed of a law devised and invented by the *hearts* of the Gentiles, but a law, the same in substance as that revealed to the Jews, written upon their *hearts*, delineated and infixed there by some external impression. Such was the TRADITION of their fathers; which, though gradually perverted, was handed down, and made, in fact, such an appeal to the sense and perception of *right*, which every man has by his very mental constitution, as to become, and in many respects to remain, an AUTHORITATIVE rule of CONSCIENCE. For that the heathens connected it with a superior authority to that of man, is evident from Cicero, "By what law? By what right? By that which Jupiter himself has established, that every thing salutary to the public should have the character of lawful and just. For the law is nothing else but that right reason which we have derived from a Divine counsel and will, commanding things honest and praiseworthy, and prohibiting the contrary." Still this law, in its best manifestations, was capable of being corrupted by the will, and was actually so. The unbiassed convictions of man must be in favour of what is *right* and *fit*, even as intellectual perceptions; and these are with difficulty fully subdued; but a corrupt will and affections more or less prevail in all sinning men, and the light within them becomes darkness. This awfully took place in the heathen world. Still God left not himself without witness.

Still it may be asked how this doctrine of the possible salvation of the Gentiles, in a course of "well doing," comports with his main design to show that both Jews and Gentiles were under wrath, and needed that Gospel which he gloried to preach as the power of God unto salvation? Let it be remarked, in answer, that although he states the possibility, his general representation of the actual condition of the Gentiles shows that, in point of fact, he thought the number of pious Gentiles to be exceeding few. He admits, of course, that the Jew might be saved, but dwells upon the corrupt state of his own nation everywhere as a proof how much they needed the Gospel; both required the administration of the remedy in its most efficient form, in order to save those who would not be saved without it, although the possibility of salvation remained to both.—Besides, St. Paul did not attribute the salvation of a pious Gentile, any more than of a pious Jew, to a constitution of moral government at all different from that of the Gospel; so that it could be said, as some have dreamed, here is one man saved by the law of nature, another by the law of Moses, a third by the Gospel. When we speak now of sin and punishment, we refer to the moral law as contained in the Gospel; and so when we speak of good works and holiness, their root; for that moral law is the rule of both. But it does not follow from this that we

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

18 And knowest *his* will, and *approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

* Or, *triest the things that differ.*

separate that law from that gracious constitution of free and unmerited mercy in Christ under which we are all by the kindness of God our Saviour placed. We may, indeed, make the separation of the preceptive part from the evangelical part, as did the Jews, as to their own law; but in the kind of moral government under which man has been placed, ever since he was placed in the hands of a Mediator, they have been united.—With the law of Moses there was, therefore, in all ages, an evangelical grace united; and so with the law written on the heart. It was taught and handed down by the patriarchs in connection with the doctrine of typical sacrifices, and the means of propitiation for sin, and obtaining the favour and help of God; while, independent of the degree of distinct knowledge which the Gentiles might have, they were the subjects of Christ's redemption, and were never treated on the ground of rigid law. This doctrine of the participation of all men in the benefits of the obedience of Christ, as all had participated in the effects of the disobedience of Adam, he expressly dwells upon in chapter v. By whatever means, therefore, any Gentiles had been rescued from vice, and brought to *do the things enjoined by the law*, they all emanated from, and were rendered efficient by, that scheme of redemption which had been laid from the beginning as the basis of God's moral government of a fallen world. Had Jews and Gentiles preserved even that clear knowledge of this which they all originally possessed, they would have been bound to receive the Gospel in its perfected form; for that had been, in type and promise, the only ground of their hope from the beginning, and now presented to them the great substance. How much more was it necessary to their salvation now that their original light, both as to law and grace, had become so deeply darkened; and a special interposition of revelation and supernatural influence upon the hearts, sunk into the very death of sin, was necessary to save the world.

Verses 17–20. *Behold, thou art called a Jew, &c.*—In the following verses the apostle pursues the same argument, which is not merely to prove that the Jews were sinners as well as the Gentiles, but that they, as well as "the sinners of the Gentiles," were liable to punishment, and that in a future life, contrary to their own received doctrine, "that every Israelite has a portion in the life to come." Nay, still as his course of observation in the subsequent part of this chapter shows, their religious distinction as God's peculiar people, so far from exempting them from punishment, only served to heighten their guilt, and aggravate their condemnation.

Restest in the law, &c.—Thou *leanest upon* and *trustest* in the law, that is, in the great privilege of having had express revelations of the will of God from himself. *And makest thy boast of God*, as thy God, the glorious object of thy worship, and as, in a special sense, "the Lord God of Israel." *And knowest his will*, that having been explicitly stated by revelation on all moral duties, as well as matters of faith and worship; *and approvest the things that are more excellent*, triest the things that differ in their moral qualities, in order to the discovery and approval of what is excellent; *being instructed* for this purpose *out of the law*, or by the law, as the great and infallible rule and standard; a high privilege which the wisest among the Gentiles had not, who leaned to their own wisdom. *And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind.* Here, and in what follows, the apostle has been supposed to glance at the titles assumed by the Jewish doctors. This title, *guides of the blind*, our Lord turns against them with great severity by calling them "blind guides." *A light of them which are in darkness:* so they complimented each other, one as "the lamp of light," another as "the holy lamp," a third as "the lamp of Israel." *An instructer of the foolish*, the very title, says Rosenmuller, which Maimonides gives to one of his treatises, מורה נבכים, *a teacher of babes*, another title for a public instructer. But though these were titles of their doctors, St. Paul is not speaking of them in particular, but of the Jews in general; and with reference to his ability to teach a Gentile, every Jew, though but in the ordinary degree *instructed in the law*, might be called, without exaggeration, *a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, &c.*—This office, too, some of them well fulfilled; for many Greeks in the cities where the Jews were settled had been brought to the knowledge of the true God, and are mentioned several times in the Acts of the Apostles as proselytes. *Which hast the form of*

20 An instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is [f] written.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one

[f] Isaiah lii, 5; Ezek. xxxvi, 20, 23.

knowledge and of the truth in the law; the delineation, μορφωσις, in the mind or judgment of what is contained in the law. This does not mean, as some have understood, a shadowy unsubstantial appearance of Divine truth; but a real and accurate scheme of it in the mind, which was no doubt true as to those moral subjects to which St. Paul principally refers. He grants indeed all this, in order to fix in their minds a deeper sense of the enormity of their offences.

Verse 21. *Teachest thou not thyself?*—That is, practically, so as to render thy superior knowledge available to thy superior sanctity.

Dost thou steal?—Commit fraud in any way; and it is probable that the apostle principally refers to frauds practised in dealing, for which the Jews were then, and are still notorious. This character they obtained from their becoming a commercial people, and it was in this character chiefly that they were planted in the Greek cities after the Macedonian conquest. They were not worse in this respect than the Gentiles; but they ought to have been much better.

Verse 22. *Adultery.*—This sin so prevailed among them that the application of the legal ordeal to the suspected woman had long been laid aside, and to what extent it prevailed among the scribes and Pharisees of Judea, may be gathered from the history of the woman taken in adultery, John viii, 9.

Sacrilege.—By withholding their offerings and dues, at least in part, through covetousness and irreligion, and thus *robbing the temple.* With this species of robbery the Jews were charged in the time of the Prophet Malachi, which he terms "robbing God."

Verse 23. *Dishonourest thou God?*—Among the Gentiles, who would naturally be led to consider the just praises which the Jews bestowed upon their law and religion as a vain boast, seeing they were not made better than others by it. Similar dishonours have often been done to our Divine religion and its Author among heathen nations, by the cruelty, injustice, rapacity, and immoralities of persons bearing the Christian name.

Verse 24. *Blasphemed.*—Lightly and irreverently spoken of.

As it is written.—The apostle probably refers to Ezekiel xxxvi, 23: "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them."

Verse 25. *If thou keep the law.*—Not otherwise; which is said in opposition to the delusive opinion of the Jews, who regarded their circumcision as a pledge of salvation. Grotius, Schoettgen, Macknight, and others have shown how rooted was the conviction among the Jews that salvation was secured to them by their circumcision. Can we wonder at that, when thousands among ourselves have a similar opinion as to baptism? Under this word the apostle includes the covenant relation of which circumcision was a sign, with all its religious advantages, which, if improved so as to lead to holiness of heart and life, would indeed profit them by becoming a means of grace; but if not, *thy circumcision is made uncircumcision,* thou hast no better a hope of heaven than the wicked Gentile.

Verse 26. *Therefore if the uncircumcision, &c.*—By *the uncircumcision* the apostle means the uncircumcised Gentiles. *The righteousness,* δικαιωματα, *of the law* is its precepts. The *counting* or reckoning of *uncircumcision for circumcision* is treating the pious Gentile, though less favoured as to religious privileges, as one of the peculiar and favoured people of God, and giving him the advantages of a covenant of grace not so formally and visibly made with him.

Verse 27. *Uncircumcision which is by*

outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

nature.—Here the apostle first intimates what he afterward more expressly states, that there is a spiritual circumcision which those naturally uncircumcised may partake of, and which if not experienced by the Jew his corporal circumcision would avail him nothing. This naturally uncircumcised but spiritually circumcised Gentile, says the apostle, shall *condemn thee, who by the letter and circumcision*, that is, who, with (the advantages of) the letter of the law, and the covenant rite of circumcision, *dost transgress the law*. Διὰ has this sense, chap. xiv, 20. Macknight renders rather freely, "judge thee a transgressor of law, though a Jew by literal circumcision;" but close upon the sense.

Verse 28. *Not a Jew, which is one outwardly*.—He is not a true son of Abraham, a member of that spiritual Church of which the visible Church of the Jews was but the sensible form, who has nothing but natural birth and fleshly circumcision to plead.—The true circumcision is of *the heart*, the cutting off and putting away all its corrupt affections by the sanctification of grace; *in the spirit*, which does not mean the spirit or soul of man, which is expressed by *the heart* in the preceding clause, but in the *spiritual* sense of the law, and not in *the letter*, its literal sense merely. That circumcision had a spiritual intention in its very institution is evident from its being "a seal of the righteousness which is by faith:" it was a visible declaration of the doctrine of the justification of man by faith; and obedience to the rite was a profession of faith in the doctrine. That it implied a moral obligation, also, appears from Deut. x, 16: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked;" and the highest promises of grace and personal salvation are expressed by reference to it: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Like Christian baptism, it was "an outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace:" and he who did not allow the latter would in vain plead the former as the ground of his exemption from the curses of a violated law.

Thus the apostle establishes that great point so necessary to convince the Jews of the value and necessity of Christianity—that they were not only sinners like the Gentiles, but liable, like them, to the wrath of God, notwithstanding their religious distinctions and privileges. But as every thing depended upon convincing them of this, since, if the Jews were safe in consequence of being Abraham's seed, Christianity could be of no importance to them, in the next chapter he answers an objection, and confirms the whole from their own Scriptures.

CHAPTER III.

1 *The Jew's prerogative:* 3 *which they have lost:* 9 *howbeit the law convinceth them also of sin:* 20 *therefore no flesh is justified by the law,* 28 *but all, without difference, by faith only:* 31 *and yet the law is not abolished.*

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

CHAPTER III. Verse 1. *What advantage then hath the Jew? &c.*—The apostle frequently uses the interrogatory style, either to give strength to his own conclusions, or to bring forward what he knew would be the objections of others. To the doctrine which he had laid down, that the religious privileges of the Jews did not ensure their future salvation, he introduces the natural objection of those who reasoned like them on these subjects: *What advantage then*, what superiority in matters of religion and religious hope, *hath the Jew? or what profit*, benefit, *is there in circumcision*, by which the Jews are initiated into covenant with God, and become his peculiar people? This advantage he allows to be great in every respect, since the religious privileges with which they were thereby invested were so many instituted means of obtaining grace and salvation; but he sums them all up in their having had the oracles of God committed to them; both as this was the crowning privilege, and to intimate that their religious privileges did not, OF THEMSELVES, place them in a state of salvation, but that they all, like the word of God itself, were addressed to their understanding, and were designed to be the means of religious instruction and direction, which they were to follow out to

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but [a] every man a liar; as it is written, [b] That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

[a] Psalm cxvi, 11.

[b] Psalm li, 4.

its practical application. Such was the nature of circumcision itself, and of their sacrifices, festivals, and typical ceremonies.

Verse 2. *Committed the oracles of God, &c.*—By *the oracles of God*, τα λογια τϑ Θϑ, St. Paul means the Holy Scriptures, according to the usual division, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The heathens used to call the pretended responses of their deities λογια; which is the word the apostle here uses, as it is frequently used by the LXX., for those immediate communications from God which are contained in the Jewish Scriptures. It is evident, therefore, that these writings were received by St. Paul and the Jews as of Divine inspiration. They regarded them not as words of men, but oracles of God. The Jews are said to have been *intrusted* with them, because Judaism was, in fact, a conservative dispensation, by which the light of truth might be kept from extinction during all those ages in which the nations of the earth were running mad with error and idolatry of every kind. These blessed records of the Divine oracles were therefore committed to one people to preserve and partially to diffuse, until the fulness of time, when all nations should, through the Gospel, be put into the possession of them. That advantage, in the meantime, belonged to the Jews, who, by means of these oracles, had the knowledge of God, the promises of Messiah, the doctrine of a future life, and were instructed in the way of salvation.

Verse 3. *For what if some did not believe? &c.*—Commentators have here greatly perplexed the apostle's course of observation, for want of holding this and the following verses close to the context. The apostle had stated, in answer to the objection, that, although the sinning Jews should perish notwithstanding their advantages, yet the advantages were great, and chiefly as to their possessing the oracles of God. Now he goes on to state that, though some did not believe these oracles, had not that genuine faith in their warnings and threatenings, nor, indeed, in their spiritual promises, which is necessary to put men in possession of the saving and renewing influence of the word of Divine truth; yet their unbelief did not affect the faithfulness of God. This use of the term *faith* is quite in the manner of St. Paul, who, speaking of the ancient Jews, says that "the Gospel," the good news, "preached to them, did not profit them, not being mixed with FAITH in them that heard it," Heb. iv, 2; and they therefore perished. It is their practical unbelief, and their want of practical faith, here as well as there, of which he speaks. But he then asks, by way of rendering the negative more emphatic, *Shall their unbelief make the faith*, the faithfulness, *of God without effect?* shall it *abolish* or *destroy* God's faithfulness to his own oracles, who promises life only to the penitent, the believing, and the holy, and threatens sure vengeance against persevering and obstinate sinners of any class? That the execution of the *threatenings* of the oracles of God is here referred to, as the object of the Divine *faithfulness* of which the text speaks, is manifest from what follows; for of the next verse no consistent sense can be made, if the faithfulness of God be confined to the promises alone, and those especially which relate to the seed of Abraham, which is the view usually taken.

Verse 4. *God forbid, &c.*—This negation contains a strong implied assertion of the contrary. Whatever becomes of the opinions and theories of men, this is a first principle, that THE TRUTH OF GOD must be acknowledged, and that both in his threatenings as well as promises, which was the point the Jews denied. As to the Gentiles, indeed, God's threatenings against sin might be interpreted strictly; but not as to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, the friend of God. Hence the force of the quotation from Psalm li, 4, where David acknowledges the justice of God with regard to the punishment denounced against him and his posterity by the Prophet Nathan, in consequence of his adultery and murder: "That thou mightest be justified in thy sentence, and be clearly right in every judicial act." David was indeed a man in special relation to God; yet his sins were visited with severity; and when he confesses those offences in this penitential psalm, and reviews the sentence which his Judge had pronounced against him and his house, he justifies it, and acknowledges that in that, as well as in every other case, such was the essential righteousness of God, that he must be *justified in his sayings*, or sentences; and should any question them, that he would, by the strong demonstration of the equity of all his proceedings, *overcome when judged*. It was to these views, and this humble temper of David, that St. Paul wished to bring the Jews, that they might "acknowledge their sin," and ascribe righteousness to God who had placed them

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that

under condemnation as sinners. The apostle and the LXX. translate the Hebrew word which we render "mayest be clear," by *νικησης*, "mayest overcome," which is the same in sense; for he who is cleared when accused overcomes his accuser, and carries his cause.

Verses 5, 6. *But if our unrighteousness, &c.*—Still in order to attain clear views of these passages, which have been by most commentators so greatly obscured, the scope of the discourse must be strictly kept in mind. These words are not, as many suppose, a new objection; but are to be joined with the preceding verse, the argument of which, indeed, they continue. This is indicated by their not being introduced by the particle *γαρ*, which marks the other transitions. The apostle having quoted the preceding passage from Psalm li, continues his own observations, but not in the person of the objecting Jews: *But if* it be so, that the judgments of God are so righteous as not to be called in question, and *our unrighteousness* thus *commends*, proves, and demonstrates, *συνιςησι, the righteousness*, or justice *of God, what shall we say?* meaning, what can we say? We ought to be silent, and, like David, in the passage quoted, confess the unquestionable rectitude of the decision. We must either acknowledge that, or else we must blasphemously deny it, and affirm that *God is unrighteous*. Is *God then unrighteous who taketh vengeance* on the wicked Jews? *I speak as a man:* I put the case hypothetically in the language of wicked men, prone to throw the blame from themselves, and to challenge the justice of God; but this no Jew can affirm. He cannot say that God is unrighteous in taking vengeance on sinners, because he acknowledges that the Gentiles at least will be condemned; and if wicked Jews were to be screened, though guilty of the same crimes, *how then shall God judge the world*, the whole world of Jews and Gentiles? that is, how shall he do this *righteously* and according to his own character of *truth*, if he show so gross a partiality and respect of persons?

Verses 7, 8. *For if the truth of God, &c.*—This is a new and distinct objection. If the Jews could no longer urge against the arguments of the apostle, that the mere possession of superior privileges would exempt them from the punishment due to their offences, still their zeal to make the true God known, and to promote his glory and

worship, might plead for them. The fact could not be denied: whatever might have been the conduct of the earlier Jews, who were given much to idolatry, those who after the captivity were spread through the Greek and Latin cities maintained generally the worship of God, and were zealous to make proselytes from the heathen. This was reckoned an act of great merit; and though they were not solicitous to make the proselytes better men, yet if they brought them to acknowledge and worship the true God, this was their boast. They were indeed so urgent in this respect, that it is referred to by Horace, as proverbial. Our Lord, when he speaks of the Pharisees "compassing sea and land," that is, using all sorts of means, "to make one proselyte," intimates that they were not very scrupulous as to the arts they employed; and here the truth of God is said to have abounded expressly through their lie, *ψευσμα*, deceit of any kind. This *truth of God* is truth respecting God, which was proposed to the belief of the Gentile proselytes; and the *abounding* of this truth cannot easily be referred to any thing but to the gathering of proselytes from their heathen neighbours. That they often, at least, thus promoted the glory of God by deceit and falsehood, they did not affect to deny; but seem to have grounded upon it an argument against St. Paul's severe doctrine,—the doctrine he had preached previously in many places, and therefore well knew how his countrymen wrestled with it,—that the sins of Jews as well as of others placed them in a state of damnation. How, said they, can that be, since we all acknowledge that, though we often make proselytes by means not perfectly justifiable, yet it is a most meritorious act, and causes the truth of God to abound to his glory? Such sins, therefore, they said, will not be punished; and this would be set up as a refutation of the apostle's doctrine. If the truth of God is made known, if Gentiles are brought to worship and glorify him, why *yet am I judged*, condemned by you, *as a sinner?* To this the apostle subjoins two answers. The first is drawn from a slander thrown by these very Jews and others upon the apostles as Christians, that *they did evil that good might come;* but if they condemned this in Christians, though the charge was false, how then could they justify it in themselves? The second answer is apostolic and authoritative, but founded upon the whole tenor of both the Jewish and Christian revelations,—

we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

9 What then? are we better *than they?*

No, in no wise: for we have before proved *both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin..

* Greek, *charged.*

that the final condemnation of persons who acted upon this detestable maxim would be JUST, since it is the first duty of every individual to avoid all sin, and the pretence of promoting some good thereby would sanction the greatest crimes.

The sense of this passage is plain, the construction not so obvious. Bloomfield includes οτι within the parenthesis, and observes, "The sense then will be, And why, (και being adjective for καιτοι,) at this rate, may not *we*, as we are slanderously reported to do, and some say we maintain, do evil that good may come?"

Verse 9. *What then? are we better than they?*—What, then, shall we conclude that we Jews are better than the Gentiles? *No, in no wise*, certainly not; and thus the apostle comes back to the great point from which he set out,—*for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*, all guilty of sin. The word αιτιαςθι signifies not merely to prove, but to prove forensically, and therefore to convict, to bring in, as it were, that verdict of guilty which leaves the criminal to the sentence of the law. Here, therefore, it may be well to mark the steps of the argument. The point to be proved was, the necessity and excellence of the Gospel, *as the power of God unto salvation*, or as having a Divine efficiency to save, and this especially, as adapted to the case of the guilty against whom *the wrath of God was revealed from heaven*, having this grand peculiarity, that it revealed to the faith of men a method of pardoning and saving even the guilty, consistent with the righteous administration of a just and holy God; for thence, he observes, is *the righteousness of God by faith revealed by faith*, establishing the principle, that *the just shall live by faith*. But it was necessary to convince men that they needed such a provision of infinite wisdom and mercy, or to press it upon their attention and acceptance would be in vain. He shows, therefore, 1. That all *ungodliness and unrighteousness* exposed men to the wrath of God, chap. i, 18. Then, 2. That the Gentiles were notoriously guilty of this ungodliness and unrighteousness; which he illustrates by an awful but just enumeration of their mental and sensual vices, and thus shows that not only were they *worthy of death*, God's penalty against sin, but that they knew that this was God's sentence, by the light which remained among them. 3. He charges the Jews with the same sins, both of the heart and life,—a fact which is confirmed by their history and their own writers, as the fact of the immoralities of the Gentiles is confirmed by their history and their own writers. But in this the Jews differed from the Gentiles. The latter, it appears from chap. i, 32, *knew the judgment*, or righteous appointment, *of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death;* but the Jew, without denying this to be the judgment of God, nay, asserting it as to the Gentiles, *thought*, imagined, wrapped himself up in the delusion, conceit, that he, being a Jew, should "escape the judgment of God;" though he did *the same things*. Therefore, 4. The apostle applies himself to dissipate this delusion, and with wonderful earnestness repeats and refutes every objection they were in the habit of making to the doctrine of their liability to future punishment for their sins, or anticipating such delusive reasonings as he knew their course of thinking on these subjects would suggest. This refutation of their favourite and fatal error, and which alone was sufficient to prevent them from receiving the Gospel, I have shown runs on from chap. ii, 3, to chap. iii, 8, where it terminates. I am, indeed, aware of the difficulty of tracing the connection of this part of the discourse, where the subject is greatly varied in its aspect, and the transitions are abrupt. But, by considering that the subject of this whole section of the epistle is the refutation of the error just mentioned, a much more consistent and uniform sense of the different parts is brought out; whereas, it is quite difficult to conceive the connection of the usual interpretations with the general arguments. For instance, if we interpret verse 3 of this chapter, with many whom Macknight has followed in substance, "If some did not believe in Christ, the promised seed, shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God, in his promises to be a God to Abraham's seed, without effect?" how can this be made to harmonize in any conceivable manner with that part of the apostle's reply taken from David's psalm of penitent confession, "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged," or brought into judgment? Again, as to verse 5, if it be put into the mouth of a Jew, which is generally done by interpreters, as a reason why he should not be punished, in what sense could such a Jew, pleading for his impunity, argue that his unrighteousness did, or at least was allowed to, *commend the righteousness of God*, which manifestly means his punitive justice? This is clearly contradictory. No Jew could reason in this manner, nor the apostle put such an argu-

10 As it is written, [c] There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them

[c] Psalm xiv, 1–3.

ment into his mouth. Hence some, who have perceived the incongruity, have given to the righteousness of God the forced sense of *mercy*. The same may be said of the usual interpretations of verse 7. They want either consistency or connection with the scope of the discourse.

Verses 10–19. *As it is written, There is none righteous, &c.*—As the apostle himself asserts that he resumes the subject from which he had diverged in order to rouse the Jews from their false security, and now comes back to the great point that both Jews and Gentiles were equally guilty of sin, and obnoxious to "the wrath of God, revealed from heaven against it," it is clear that the scriptures he quotes were designed to establish this fundamental doctrine. The question is, how they do so? To which it may be replied that, if the passages are to be understood as confined to the Jewish nation, they would only prove that at different periods the evil characters mentioned were to be found in it; and as vicious persons of the same kind have been found in all ages and in all places,—or those dispositions among men which, if not checked by external circumstances, break out into open wickedness,—it might be infallibly argued from this, that we cannot account for the majority of mankind being wicked, without admitting such a taint of human nature as must necessarily lead all to actual sin, not renewed by the grace of God. But though this would establish a firmer foundation for what follows, the apostle must be understood as speaking more directly.—The passages are quoted from different Psalms, and the last of them from the Prophet Isaiah; but it is clear that they were understood by St. Paul as not only moral descriptions of the Jews of a particular age, or of a particular class, but of these persons as men, wicked and unrenewed, and so equally descriptive of men in general, either as to the tendencies of their nature, or their actual overt acts. The first quotation contained in verses 10–12, is from Psalm xiv, where it is expressly said to be a description of "the children of men;" that is, of all men in their unrenewed state, until, indeed, they become the children of God. It is, in fact, the solemn decision of God upon an inspection of a fallen race. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside," &c. The 13th verse unites quotations from Psalm v, 9, and Psalm cxl, 3; in neither of which places are any particular persons spoken of, but wicked men are spoken of generally, as "the foolish," "the evil man," "the wicked," "the violent," &c. The quotation in verse 14 is taken from Psalm x, 7, and there too it refers to "the wicked" generally; and to wicked, proud, and oppressive men, not confined to one age or place, and to those vices, the roots and seeds of which are in the nature of all. The remainder is taken from Isaiah lix, 7, 8, where it seems upon the face of the passage, that from complaining of the wickedness of his people, the prophet is carried out to expatiate upon the wickedness of human nature, or of men in general; at least so he was evidently understood by the apostle, who was, independent of his inspiration, better judge of the Hebrew Scriptures than some who have attempted to correct his reasoning on this particular.

In some good MSS., says Bloomfield, all these passages are found together in Psalm xiv. This would strengthen the argument, since that Psalm, as we have seen, expressly, not by implication, describes the moral condition of "the children of men;" but whether found together or scattered, this is clear, that St. Paul intended us to consider these passages just like that of our Lord when he speaks of the evils which proceed out of the heart of man. Certainly Christ intended to show what the evils are of which every man is not only capable, but actually guilty; although an overt act of every kind might not take place in each individual. So here. Some of these evils are chargeable upon every one; and there is none of which, under certain circumstances, man's lapsed nature does not render him capable: St. Paul presents a list of moral offences, some of the mind and heart, others more conspicuous in act; of some of which he tells us, on the

who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become * guilty before God.

20 Therefore [d] by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God

* Or, *subject to the judgment of God.*

[d] Gal. ii, 16.

authority of the Scriptures, every man is guilty; and so he establishes the conclusion which follows. This conclusion is thus solemnly introduced, *Now we know that whatsoever the law says*—using the term *law* in its general sense for the whole Scriptures, through which, in fact, the moral law of the Jews was diffused, *it saith*, it speaks, *to them who are under the law*, for their information and instruction. The apostle neither says nor means that it speaks OF or CONCERNING them that are under the law, as though the passages quoted related to the Jews only, which would fall short of the apostle's design; but the meaning is, that the law in these general declarations as to the sinfulness of all men, taught the Jews, to whom this epistle was specially addressed, and through them teaches all, this great and humbling doctrine, but one most necessary to be known, in order that men may be prepared to receive the Gospel—THAT THE WHOLE WORLD, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, IS GUILTY BEFORE GOD; and this it does in order that *every mouth may be stopped*, as being consciously guilty, and having no answer or excuse to offer, but might humbly acknowledge that guilt which could neither be denied nor palliated, and from the punishment of which there was but one way of escape. *To stop the mouth* is to silence or take away all power of defence; and to be *guilty*, υποδικος, is to be liable to legal punishment; and these quotations from their own Scriptures, in which Jews as well as Gentiles are included, seeing that they speak of men universally in their fallen state, tended strongly to produce the effect for which St. Paul adduces them,—to silence entirely any delusive attempt to which the Jews resorted to palliate or excuse their sins, as though they were not reckoned to them as such, and to awaken them to a due sense of their great danger, as equally with the Gentiles exposed to the wrath of God. In the earnestness of St. Paul to produce this conviction, we must not only regard him as a theologian, endeavouring to clear the way for an important argument, but as a minister pitying the blind delusions of his people, and resorting to various modes of conviction to touch their consciences and to arouse them to a just consideration of their state.

Verse 20. *Therefore by the deeds of the law, &c.*—If, taking διοτι in the sense of *because*, we connect these words with the preceding, they serve to heighten the view there given of the miserable condition of Jews and Gentiles, by showing that the law against which they have sinned can make no provision for their impunity, and that this its inexorable character cuts them off, therefore, from all hope. This, indeed, in any way that the connection of the words with the scope of the apostle can be considered, must be the effect of the doctrine so clearly laid down; but διοτι may probably be more satisfactorily taken as a particle of transition to another, but still, in the general argument of the apostle, a closely allied subject. For, having established the fact that all men are under condemnation, he now proceeds to speak of their possible justification. He first lays down a general and most important axiom, that none can be justified by *the deeds of the law*; and, therefore, if justification be attained, it must come through some other institution or appointment of God. This negative view is a most important branch of his subject, although he employs but few words to establish it. By *the law* he means the law of God in its manifestation, whether to Jews or Gentiles.—This, perhaps, is indicated by the absence of the article, εξ εργων νομου, *by works of law*; but the sense obliges us to this general interpretation; for, as Bishop Middleton observes, "it is his purpose to show that no man whatever can be justified by the works either of the Jewish law or of any other: πασα σαρξ, like ο κοσμος in the preceding verse, cannot but be understood universally; and what follows, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*, is plainly a universal proposition."—He had shown that the Divine law, or will of God, existed among the Gentiles as well as the Jews: that both had sinned against it; and that, as to both alike, by what he calls *works of law*, they were excluded from justification; that is, from being declared and treated as righteous persons. For since, in the reason of the thing, the law of God declares and treats no man as righteous but him who perfectly and without intermission obeys all its commands, and both Jews and Gentiles were convicted of sin, all hope founded upon innocence was for ever gone. Hence the apostle adds, *For by law is the knowledge of sin*; it manifests every offence, as a straight rule shows every obliquity, or as a touchstone detects false metal, or as light makes darkness manifest; and the more perfect, therefore, our knowledge of the law is, the more fully must it exclude all hope of a meritorious justification; since the extent, the evil, and the aggravation of our offences

without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all

are more perfectly set forth by its searching light, the nearer we approach it. And all hope for the future is cut off, as well as for the past, by the same rule. For, although indeed men often fancy that future obedience may avail them, yet, as soon as the true nature of LAW is apprehended, every one will be convinced that his former sins still lie in their penalty against him; that to make an act of obedience a compensation for an act of disobedience, would be so irregular and imperfect a system of law, that no perfect moral government could stand upon it; that in fact, it would be legislating for imperfect and not perfect obedience, and unsettling the obligation of the latter by declaring it unnecessary, and that the universe could be well enough regulated without it. Still farther, all sin is the result of moral pravity, arising from the lapsed and fallen condition of man, so that what he calls his future obedience is itself imperfect, insufficient, and therefore sinful, either from defect or some other vitiating principle. Now that shadowy virtue in which men are apt to trust, God's pure and perfect law, which requires truth in the inward parts, supreme love to God, and absolutely perfect obedience, detects, and exposes its true character, so that it convicts us still of sin, notwithstanding all our efforts, and, as far as moral law is concerned, leaves every sinner without hope of being *justified;* that is, of being treated as a righteous man, and exempted from punishment.

Some have thought that St. Paul includes here also in *deeds of law*, ceremonial observances, and excludes them also from the office of justifying. The whole context shows that he speaks of works of moral law, and not of any religious observances, except as they may be prescribed by moral law, such as the worship of God, and the Sabbath, which were appointed for man in innocence. As to sacrificial and propitiatory ceremonies, he does not and could not notice them distinctly. For before Christ, when acceptable to God, they were acts of faith in the promised Christ, and so supposed that very doctrine of justification by faith of which he is about to speak, but on which he has not yet entered; and when not acts of faith in a promised Redeemer, they lost their character as acts of faith, were regarded as morally meritorious, and therefore stood upon the same false ground as all other acts of imperfect moral obedience, by which men often vainly hoped to merit something at the hands of God.

Verse 21. *But now the righteousness of God without the law.*—Here the apostle, having not only proved all men sinners, but cut off all hope of justification by the law, breaks forth into a full enumeration of that glorious subject, for which he had been preparing the way, and to which he had referred in the introduction of the epistle,—the justification even of the guilty, by God, the righteous Governor of the world, and that in a manner consistent with his own most righteous and holy character. This is the subject on which he expatiates as far as verse 26 inclusive.

The whole passage requires the deepest attention. By *the righteousness of God*, cannot be understood, as in verse 5, the punitive justice of God; because this righteousness is said to be *without law*, which punitive justice never is, but essentially connected with it. Nor does it here mean the righteousness which God possesses, that is, his rectitude and holiness; for that is not *manifested without the law*, but has its most illustrious exhibition in it. Nor does *righteousness* here mean *mercy*, as some would have it; for in this sense the word never occurs in the New Testament. The import is the same as that of the same phrase in chap. x, 3, where the apostle, speaking of the Jews, opposes "the righteousness of God" to that "righteousness of their own," which they were endeavouring to establish; plainly meaning by the latter, their own method of seeking justification in opposition to that which God had appointed. *The righteousness of God*, in this verse, then, signifies God's method of constituting men righteous, though in fact they are criminal, and obnoxious to punishment. This is said to be *manifested without the law*, or, literally, *without* LAW. For there is but one class of beings whom pure *law* can declare and treat as righteous, and these are the absolutely sinless; whereas, under the method here said to be *manifested*, not the SINLESS, but the SINFUL, are declared and treated as righteous persons. This procedure must therefore be WITHOUT LAW, whose sole office it is to justify the innocent and condemn the guilty. It necessarily proceeds from an entirely distinct institution and appointment. But though *now manifested*, that is, clearly and perfectly brought from under the veil of types, and the symbolical language of prophecy, this method of affording hope to the human race, this grand branch of the Divine administration, was not a novelty, but had all along been *witnessed by the law and the prophets*. The law and the prophets comprehend the whole Old Testament; for, from the beginning, sinful men had been taught to hope for salvation through the great Redeemer promised to our first parents, and to seek it by faith; while the grand

and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

* Or,

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath *set forth *to be foreordained.*

example of Abraham's gratuitous justification by faith in the promised Christ, of which circumcision was the standing TESTIMONY, and the types of the ceremonial law, and the promises contained in the writings of the prophets, all gave witness to the fact, that a method of justifying guilty men, quite independent of moral law, had been introduced by Divine appointment, and acted upon in God's administration from the beginning.

Verses 22, 23. *Even the righteousness of God* which is *by faith of Jesus Christ, &c.*—The righteousness of God being said to be *by faith to all that believe*, farther proves that the phrase means something done or appointed by God, which passes over to man, and thus confirms the exposition of it above given, the method by which men are justified, or are accepted as righteous, as revealed in the Gospel. This justification is, by faith, *δια πιστεως*; *δια* marking the INSTRUMENTAL cause, FAITH; and the object of this faith is *Christ Jesus*, the meritorious or procuring cause of this grace and salvation; for there seems no reason for making a distinction between faith *of* Jesus Christ, and faith *in* Jesus Christ. In Philippians iii, 9, the apostle also uses the genitive, where he could mean nothing else but faith of which Christ was the object: "the righteousness which is through the faith OF Christ," through believing in him. What follows, *unto all and upon all*, *εις παντας και επι παντας*, *them that believe*, has somewhat perplexed interpreters; some drawing various distinctions from the prepositions; others cancelling the latter clause, but without authority; others regarding it as a repetition of the same thought for the sake of emphasis. The meaning seems to be, that this justification by faith IS OFFERED TO, and comes ACTUALLY into the experience and enjoyment of, all them that believe. *For there is no difference*, no distinction between Jew or Greek, as all are capable of *believing*, so all may equally attain the righteousness which is by faith; and *as all have sinned*, they are involved in a common condemnation, are equally cut off from the hope of justification by law, and are all therefore equally the subjects of that gracious constitution, by which the forgiveness of sins is bestowed through faith in the appointed Redeemer.

And come short of the glory of God.—This has been interpreted of failing of the praise and approbation of God; and, by others, of failing of the glory and blessedness of heaven. But a more probable sense is, that by sin all men have failed to glorify God their Maker, Preserver, and Governor, to which they were bound by the most indisputable obligations, and the most powerful motives.

Verse 24. *Being justified freely by his grace, &c.*—That adorable display of Divine wisdom and love by which those who are guilty are justified, is now more fully opened. 1. They are JUSTIFIED, that is, pardoned; for this appears from the next verse, where the same act is called the remission of sins: yet not simply pardoned: for the terms to justify, and justification, when applied to a guilty person, import not the being made morally just, which is indeed a separate though concomitant act of the grace of God, but just or righteous with reference to law and the Lawgiver, that is, placed in the condition of persons who have not broken the law, both with reference to exemption from punishment, and the favour and kindness of God, the Governor and Judge. 2. They are justified FREELY, *δωρεαν*, *κατα* being understood. This is opposed to MERITORIOUSLY or DESERVEDLY; it is of FREE GIFT, not of RIGHT; and hence it is added, *by his grace*, not his justice, to which the appeal for justification might have been made with confidence, had we been innocent, or could we ourselves have done any thing which would have legally cancelled our transgressions.—Those who deny the doctrine of atonement argue, that to be justified *freely* is to be freely forgiven from God's natural goodness and mercy, without regard "to any other consideration whatever;" and yet in this very verse another and leading consideration is brought in,—"through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." But, beside this, it is plain from the context, that the freeness of our justification denotes the manner in which the blessing is BESTOWED, not the means by which it was PROCURED. Nor do the means by which our justification was effected, in any respect, alter its nature as a gift, or in the least diminish its freedom. We are *justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ;* but this redemption was not procured by us. It was the result of the pure love of God, who, compassionating our misery, himself provided the means of our deliverance, by sending his only begotten Son into the world, who voluntarily submitted to die upon the cross, that he might reconcile us to God.—Thus was the whole an entire act of mercy

a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the * remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

* Or, *passing over.*

on the part of God and our Saviour, begun and completed for our benefit, but without our intervention; and therefore, in *respect to us*, the pardon of sin must be accounted a gift, though it comes to us through redemption.

Through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.—Redemption has sometimes been restrained to the liberation of captives, by paying a ransom, λυτρον, or redemption price; but Grotius has fully shown that it is used both by sacred and profane writers to signify not merely the liberation of captives, but deliverance from exile, death, or any other evil; and that the ransom, λυτρον, signifies every thing which satisfies another, so as to affect this deliverance. In the Gospel, that from which we are redeemed is sin, and all the evils and miseries consequent upon it: this redemption is effected by Christ,—*through the redemption that is in* or BY *Jesus Christ:* the redemption price was his LIFE. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom, λυτρον, for many," Matt. xx, 28. In whom we have redemption, την απολυτρωσιν, through his BLOOD," Eph. i, 7. That deliverance of man from sin, misery, and all other penal evils following his transgression, which constitutes our redemption by Christ, is not therefore a gratuitous deliverance, granted without a consideration, as an act of God's supposed prerogative to dispense with his own laws; but the ransom, the redemption price, was exacted and paid, one thing was given for another, "the precious blood of Christ," for condemned, captive men.

Mr. Locke greatly trifles on this passage. He urges that redemption is sometimes used in Scripture where no price is paid as a ransom. Figuratively and loosely it may, but never where our redemption by Christ is spoken of; and however many instances could be brought from the Old Testament of the use of the word, without reference to a ransom, they are all irrelevant to the argument; for in our redemption the λυτρον, the ransom, is repeatedly, expressly, and emphatically mentioned, and that price is said to be "the blood of Christ." He urges too, and in this foolish objection he has been followed by many, that if redemption necessarily supposes a price paid, it must be paid to those who hold us captive, sin or Satan; forgetting that to be subject to sin and Satan, is, by God's righteous decision, made a part of man's punishment. The satisfaction is, therefore, to be made to God, under whose *law* we are doomed to these and other miseries, and not to the instruments by whom the penalties of that law are carried into effect.

Verse 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.*—The word rendered propitiation in other passages of the New Testament is ιλασμος: here the adjective ιλαστηριον, is employed, probably with θυμα or ιερειον, understood; and so it means an expiatory sacrifice. In the LXX. and the Epistle to the Hebrews it is used for the mercy seat or covering of the ark; and if the allusion were to that, it would follow that, as this mercy seat was sprinkled with the blood of the appointed victims, and became the medium of gracious intercourse between God and the Israelites, represented by their high priest, so our Lord may be called the propitiation, as being the person in and through whom, upon the offering of his blood, God holds gracious intercourse with penitent men. The former sense is, however, to be preferred,—*whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory sacrifice.* To propitiate is to appease, to turn away the wrath of an offended person. In this case the wrath to be turned away is the wrath of God. Not that he is implacable, the unfounded objection which many bring against the doctrine of the atonement. There is not only no implacability in God, but a most tender affection toward the sinning race, which is proved by the gift of his Son. This is the most eminent proof of his love, that for our sakes "he spared not his own Son." Thus he is the fountain and first moving cause of that scheme of recovery and salvation which the death of Christ wrought into efficiency. The question is not, whether God is love, but whether he is nothing but love; whether he is not holy and just; whether we, his creatures, are or are not under law; whether this law has any penalty; and whether God, in his rectoral character, is bound to execute and uphold that law. These points are settled by what the apostle has already said, or his argument amounts to nothing: we are under law, and under guilt,—these are his decisions: the justice of God he also declares to be punitive, and we are therefore under that "wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Thus God is angry with us, and so a propitiation becomes necessary to turn away that anger from us. This propitiation is the BLOOD, the LIFE, of Christ, sacrificially offered. Socinus interpreted propitiation to mean no more than the destruction of sin; which is unsupported by a single Greek authority. The modern Socinians depart from their master,

and allow that it means the pacifying of an offended party; but contend that God is pacified by repentance. So that at last they allow rectoral wrath in God, but still overlook, not merely the meaning, but the very words of the text, where not our repentance, but Christ, in his character of Redeemer, or RANSOM-PAYER, is said to be the propitiation set forth. The SETTING FORTH of this propitiation is also an important circumstance introduced. The most satisfactory sense of προεθετο, which has been rendered both foreordained and substituted, is that of our own translation; which, in fact, includes the others: for as God himself is said to have set forth, publicly exhibited and proposed this propitiation, he himself before appointed or ordained it; the paternal mercy gave the Son, and he was the Lamb which from the beginning "God provided for a burnt-offering," and provided as a substitute for guilty men. Through all the promises and types of the law there was a *setting forth*, in some degree, of this propitiation, yet not a clear revelation, nor could be until the true sacrifice was offered. Then it was fully *exhibited* and *proposed* both by the publication of the Gospel and the Divine institution of the Lord's Supper; in which all his disciples "show forth his death" in its sacrificial nature, and as the propitiation for the sins of the world, and will continue to do so "until he come" as the righteous Judge of all. Every thing relative to the sacrifice of Christ bears the most public character, and is in accordance with its peculiar and universal exhibition.—He was offered up before the world; the doctrine of his cross forms the great subject of the evangelical ministry; it is that which is commanded to be preached, published, and proclaimed to every creature; while the institution of the Church, which is not a secret society, but "a city set on a hill," holds up to the faith and trust of men, from age to age, that grand atonement by which alone the guilty are reconciled to God.

Through faith in his blood.—This important clause expresses the means by which the propitiation becomes available to each individual. By its virtue all mankind are placed under a gracious and merciful administration, and provision is made for their salvation independent of any efforts of their own; but, in order that actual personal reconciliation with an offended God may take place, there must be personal *faith in his blood*. Faith is presented to us under two leading views: the first is that of assent or persuasion, the second that of confidence or reliance. The former may exist without the latter; and, though the basis, is certainly not that faith which is made the condition and instrument of our salvation. One is mere intellectual assent; the other is a work of the heart, a motion of the soul toward God, to lay hold upon his covenant engagements, and to rest in them. The faith by which the elders "obtained a good report" was of this character: it united assent to the truth of God's revelations with a noble confidence in his promises. "Our fathers TRUSTED in thee, and were not confounded." So here the phrase used, *faith in his blood*, indicates the nature of the faith itself; for it surely cannot mean that every man who believes historically that the blood of Christ was actually shed, nor that every man who believes that his blood was the general atonement for sin will be saved; for then, indeed, heaven would be peopled with the unsanctified and unholy, since many admit these truths with the fulness of conviction, who still live in the practice of sin; but the meaning is, TRUST *in his blood*, the reliance of a sinner consciously sinful and penitent, one, as the apostle had said, "whose mouth is stopped," who denies nothing, palliates nothing, but sinks in silent shame, as *guilty before God*; that is, he feels, confesses, that he is guilty, and relies upon the *propitiation* which God hath set forth. Both Jews and Gentiles TRUSTED in something, however delusive, to avert from them the Divine displeasure, or to secure the favour of superior powers. These things were to be wholly renounced, and the full and exclusive trust of a contrite heart be reposed in that true and only *propitiation* which was manifestly *set forth* by God, and which demanded, by the strength of its demonstrations reliance of the most absolute kind.

END OF THE EXPOSITION.

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THE END.